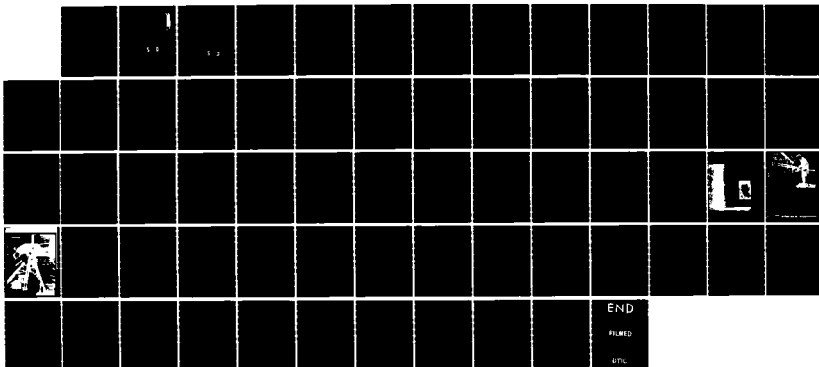


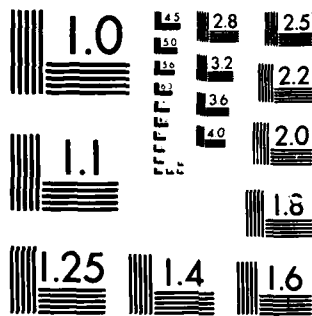
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YONGSAN: REAR AREA OPERATIONS

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
AD-A163874		
3. TITLE (and Subtitle) Battle Analysis, Yongsan, Rear Area Operations (24th Infantry Division 11-13 August 1950),		4. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Student Report
		5. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) LTC Krishan Pal (India) MAJs M. Clayton, D. Kendrick, P. Lee, J. Martin, D. Schwartz, J. Caviggia, C. Linke, J. Padelock and R. Smith		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Combat Studies Institute, USACGSC, ATZL-SWI Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027-6900		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBER
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Combat Studies Institute, USACGSC, ATZL-SWI Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-6900		12. REPORT DATE May 1984
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 61
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report)  UNCLASSIFIED
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE: Distribution Unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A battlebook prepared by students of the US Army Command & General Staff College under the supervision of the Combat Studies Institute as part of the Battle Analysis program.		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) History, Battle Analysis, Case Studies, Military Operations, Tactical Analysis Battles, Military Tactics, Korean War, Yongsan, Rear Area Security, 24th Infantry Division		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) An ad hoc formation of combat engineers and rear area troops was given the mission of securing a nine-mile portion of the MSR between the 24th Division headquarters and forward units. This force established road blocks and attempted to hold the MSR, but they were attacked in force by organized North Korean units. This is a good vehicle to study how combat service support personnel performed a rear area security mission. This example provides lessons for command and control, adequacy of forces and training of rear area personnel.		

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YONGSAN

REAR AREA OPERATIONS

24TH INFANTRY DIVISION

11-13 August 1950

Prepared by: Staff Group D/Section 1

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Submitted to the Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for subcourse P651, Battle Analysis.

Fort Leavenworth

May 1984

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ABSTRACT

COMMON REFERENCE: YONGSAN 11-13 August 1950

TYPE OPERATION: Rear Area Operations

OPPOSING FORCES: US: I Corps  
24th Division  
14th Eng Cbt Bn  
Task Force Hafeman  
24th MP Co  
24th Sig Co  
24th Div Band  
724th Ord Co  
ENEMY: 4th North Korean Division

SYNOPSIS: This analysis describes the actions taken from 11-13 August 1950, by a task force of soldiers under the command of Captain Hafeman, 24th Division Headquarters Company Commander, and another group from the 14th Combat Engineer Battalion as they performed rear area security for the division in the Pusan Perimeter of Korea. While these few days of action to secure the lines of communication from the frontline troops to the division command post are lost in the larger battles of the Naktong Bulge and the overall defense of the Pusan Perimeter, the actions do exemplify the intensity of the combat and the resourcefulness of the U.S. forces.

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24th Infantry Division War Diaries

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## REAR AREA OPERATIONS

### 24th DIVISION

11-13 August 1950

#### Section 1: Introduction to the 24th Infantry Division Rear Area Operations, 11 to 13 August 1950

During the period 11 to 13 August, 1950, an ad hoc group of combat engineers and rear area troops was given the mission of securing a nine-mile stretch of the 24th Infantry Division's main supply route (MSR) between the division headquarters and forward deployed units. This ill-trained and minimally equipped force established road blocks during the night of 11 August and took actions to hold the North Korean (NK) invaders. Despite a lack of training, equipment, communications, and personnel, these rear area soldiers were able to perform creditably against superior numbers.

Information concerning this action is extremely scarce. Primary source documents are the staff log journals from the various units involved. These accounts were further supplemented by telephonic interviews and correspondence with former participants. Published works were available to define the strategic and tactical settings; however, none were located which adequately described the rear area operations of 11-13 August 1950.

## Section 2: The Strategic Setting

United States intervention in Korea in 1950 has been questioned and condemned by some over the years. Questions have arisen in regards to the strategic importance of this mountainous peninsula which lies some 7000 miles from the mainland United States. Korea has been a strategic crossroads for centuries, trampled by Chinese, Russian, Japanese, and recently American Armies. The Japanese have viewed Korea as a pistol aimed at them from the mainland; the Chinese saw Korea as the bridgehead for Japanese penetration; the Russians as a threat to the ports of Vladivostok; and the Americans as a point in the noose of containment to choke off any further expansion of communism.

The North Korean(NK) attack across the 38th parallel came at a time when American foreign policy had left the impression that the U.S. was not prone to resist armed communist expansion in Asia. This policy contrasted with tough American stands in Iran(1946), Greece(1947-48), Berlin(1948), and the construction of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization(1949) against Soviet military expansion in Europe. President Truman had publicly announced that the United States would not become militarily involved in Asia or the Chinese civil war. This stance temporarily ended a dispute between the State Department and Department of Defense(DOD). DOD wanted the U.S. to take every possible diplomatic action to prevent the Chinese Communist invasion of Taiwan while the State Department wanted the Defense Department to agree to a military commitment to back up the diplomatic efforts. DOD argued that it did not have the capability to defend Taiwan while the State Department countered that the U.S. would be risking prestige in any empty propaganda campaign. It was expected that the Chinese Communists would invade Taiwan in the summer of 1950. The announced U.S. policy stated that no intervention was planned.

In a speech before the National Press Club on 12 January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson omitted both Taiwan and Korea from a statement on the Pacific "Defensive Perimeter" of the United States. Weak American support of Korea was confirmed by a House defeat of a supplemental Korean aid bill on 19 January and only in March 1950 was continuance of aid approved. Remarks on 4 May by the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee further confirmed the waning support of Korea by revealing that Korea had a very low priority in American strategic thinking.

Such statements were quite unsettling in the Korean capital city of Seoul. Intelligence reports continued to tell of a North Korean military build up and warned of an impending invasion. American intelligence evaluations discounted the reports. There was also a difference of opinion between American diplomatic and military officials in Korea about the relative capabilities of the North and South Korean armies. BG William L. Roberts of the Korean Military Advisory Group tended to give the South Korean(Republic of Korea-ROK) Army an edge over the North Korean Army(NKA). Ambassador

Muccio, U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, was desperately pleading for increased aid for the South Koreans to ward off the Northern threat. His plea was looked upon as just another ambassador trying to further the aid of the country where stationed and not as a need to protect U.S. vital interests.

In 1950, the United States strategic concerns in the Pacific consisted primarily of Japan. After the defeat and disarmament of Japan, the United States assumed military defense of Japan out of necessity. The U.S. defensive perimeter was seen to run along the Aleutians, to Japan, then to the Ryukyus Islands, and on to the Philippines. Senator Tom Connally when asked if Korea was an essential part of our defensive strategy replied, "No. Of course, a position like that is of some importance but it is not greatly important. Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines make the chain of defense that is necessary."

In light of these statements, it should have come as no surprise when Ambassador Muccio sent word to Secretary of State Dean Acheson on 25 June 1950, that the North Koreans had attacked. "According to Korean Army reports and partly confirmed by the Korean Military Advisory Group, North Korea invaded the Republic of Korea territory at several points. Action was initiated at 0400 hours 25 June. Ongjin was blasted by North Korean artillery fire. About 0600 hours North Korean infantry commenced crossing the 38th parallel in the Ongjin area, Kaesong area, and Chunchon area, and a reported amphibious landing south of Kangnung on the east coast. Kaesong was reportedly captured at 0900 with some ten North Korean tanks participating in the operation. North Korean forces spearheaded by tanks are closing in on Chunchon. Details of fighting in the Kangnung area are unclear, although it seems North Korean forces have cut the highway. I am conferring with Korean Military Advisory Group advisors and Korean officials this morning concerning the situation. It would appear from the nature of the attack and the manner in which it was launched that it constitutes an all-out offensive against the Republic of Korea."

Upon receiving Ambassador Muccio's message, President Truman directed that the North Korean invasion be brought to the attention of the United Nations Security Council. U.N. Ambassador Gross presented a draft resolution to the Security Council at 1400 hours 25 June. The Soviet representative was absent as a result of their boycott of all meetings at which the Republic of China was present. After some debate the resolution passed. The resolution called for both parties to cease hostilities and requested the U.N. Commission on Korea to report further.

By the evening of 25 June, the military situation was so serious that President Truman returned from his Missouri vacation for a meeting with his advisors. Secretary Acheson presented the following suggestions for considerations: (1) that General MacArthur be authorized to furnish the South Koreans with military equipment in excess of that already authorized under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program, (2) that American warplanes be employed to cover the evacuation of American women and children from Inchon, (3) that

the Air Force be authorized to destroy North Korean tanks and airplanes that attempted to interfere with the evacuation, (4) that consideration be given to further assistance that might be rendered in support of the Security Council resolution just passed or subsequent resolutions, (5) that the Seventh Fleet be ordered to prevent a Chinese Communist invasion as well as a Nationalist assault on the mainland. President Truman approved all recommendations but requested that Gen. MacArthur send a reconnaissance party to Korea for a direct report from the combat area. The strength of South Korea was still being over estimated and it was thought the South Koreans would still contain the attack. Additionally, it was expected that American fighter pilots would attack the armor spearhead of the North Korean drive on Seoul and greatly aid the South Koreans.

On 26 June, Gen. MacArthur sent the following message to President Truman, "Piecemeal entry into action vicinity Seoul by the South Korean Third and Fifth Divisions has not succeeded in stopping the penetration recognized as the enemy main effort for the past two days with the intent to seize the capital of Seoul. Tanks entering suburbs of Seoul. Government transferred to South and communications with part KMAG opened to Taegu. Ambassador and Chief KMAG remaining in city. South Korean units unable to resist determined Northern offensive. Contributory factor exclusive enemy tanks and fighter planes. South Korean casualties as an index to fighting have not shown adequate resistance capabilities or the will to fight and our estimate is that a complete collapse is imminent." Upon seeing the message, Secretary Acheson presented a five point proposal, with the most salient point being the commitment of the Navy and Air Force to the support of the South Koreans but limited to the area south of the 38th Parallel. At 1200 hours, 27 June President Truman announced the proposal and decision to support. That afternoon the UN Security Council called for urgent military measures. However, ground combat forces still had not been ordered into Korea.

On 29 June, Gen. MacArthur flew to Korea. Enroute, his air commander, LTG Stratemeyer briefed him on the problems his pilots were having by not being able to attack bases across the 38th Parallel from which the North Koreans were launching attacks into the South. Gen. MacArthur, without consulting Washington, gave the go ahead for an attack on the North Korean airfield across the 38th parallel near Pyongyang. Once in Korea, Gen. MacArthur found more confusion and trouble. Only 24,000 of the reported 100,000 South Korean troops could be located. Those that were present were unorganized, scattered and generally in full retreat. At this point, Gen. MacArthur decided to recommend commitment of U.S. ground forces. Specifically, he recommended that one regimental combat team be sent to Korea immediately followed by augmentation of the American ground combat forces to a two division strength. On 30 June, President Truman, after meeting with his advisors, agreed to give Gen. MacArthur full authority to use troops under his command. The United Nations strongly indorsed the U.S. actions.

Upon receiving approval to utilize his forces to secure/protect Pusan, Gen. MacArthur ordered three divisions, the bulk of the Eighth Army, to Korea. The four divisions of the Eighth Army had been concerned solely with occupation duties in Japan. All Infantry regiments had been stripped of the third battalion to save manpower and very little war training had been conducted. The populace as a whole was against a large standing military establishment and defense expenditures had been drastically reduced since World War II. Of the twelve American Divisions, ten Army and two Marine, only the 1st Infantry Division in Europe was at full strength and ready for combat. Fearing the Korean invasion was a feint to divert U.S. strength away from the main attack in another part of the world, the U.S. command threw only part of the combat forces into the fight.

On the 1st of July, American ground forces airlanded at Pusan. This force of less than a battalion, nicknamed Task Force Smith, was detached from the 21st Infantry Regiment of the 24th Division. This task force began to push northward through a sea of refugees toward Seoul and made the first contact with the North Koreans on 5 July. For seven hours, two rifle companies, a battery of 105-mm howitzers, two 4.2-inch mortar platoons, a platoon of 75-mm recoilless rifles, and six attached teams equipped with World War II type 2.36-inch bazookas held an entire NK division. In addition, the men of the 24th Division were badly bloodied and forced to respect the fighting ability of the North Koreans. As Task Force Smith became overwhelmed by the North Koreans, they attempted to withdraw and pass through additional elements of the 21st Infantry Regiment and the 34th Infantry Regiment which had been hurriedly brought up. Though gallant in their stands, none of these units were successful in stemming the North Korean tide.

The Eighth Army staff now began to realize the severity of the situation. The 24th Division could not turn the North Koreans back and must be reinforced immediately. The decision was made for the 24th to fight a delaying action through the mountains and rice paddies of Central Korea. The 1st Cavalry Division (Infantry), the 25th Division, and the 7th Division were to cross as rapidly as possible from Japan and reinforce the 24th. If necessary, the U.S. divisions were to pull back to a perimeter around Pusan and from this large beachhead regroup forces while men and supplies came in from the U.S.. After some period of preparation, a breakout could then be staged to drive the North Koreans back across the 38th parallel.

During the first week of July, the rains turned the crowded and heavily traveled roads into quagmires and flooded the rice paddies. The poorly trained American soldier was exhausted by his fight with the elements of heat, mud, flies, lice, and fleas, in addition to the hordes of refugees. Individually or in small units, the men of the 24th continued against great odds to fight and slow the enemy and further disrupt his timetable.

Meanwhile, the air and naval wars were going somewhat better. By 10 July, American pilots had achieved air parity at least and

some even claimed superiority. This air victory as well as the supremacy of the seas by the combined U.S. and British fleets prevented any massive enemy reinforcements or supplies from landing in South Korea and provided the time needed by the American ground forces to regroup.

By the last week of July, the American Eighth Army had greatly strengthened itself and established a logistical command at Pusan. The regrouped ROK army provided the northern rim of the perimeter. The western wall of the defense was provided by the 1st Cavalry in the north, the badly mauled 24th Division in the center and the 25th Infantry Division in the South (See Map 1). The perimeter was lightly defended at best. Each unit was responsible for extended frontages and could not choke off infiltration. The hordes of refugees were now joined by disguised NK soldiers. More than a few American soldiers were killed by a hand grenade from a group of "refugees" or a burst of machinegun fire. The Eighth Army commander continued to play a shell game of constantly shifting troops to fill holes in the perimeter. However, with each passing day that the perimeter held, the American and UN forces strengthened their positions and increased their supplies. In addition, relief in the form of massive amounts of American men and supplies were now aimed at the Korean Peninsula. (See Note Below)

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Much of the information for this section was taken from the following sources:

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### Section 3: The Tactical Situation

The tactical situation for the United Nations Forces was as grim and desperate as the strategic situation. The North Korean Army (NKA) had pushed the withdrawing South Korean and U.S. troops backward to what is known as the Pusan Perimeter, a remaining foothold on the Korean Peninsula. Eleven enemy divisions had been identified and were disposed in a disconnected line of contact encircling the defending forces. Only the sea lines of communication were left open to bring in reinforcements and supplies. The invading NKA forces concentrated their major efforts on the central part of the line against the 24th Division and attempted a wide envelopment to the south and southwest.

In particular, the NKA 4th Division, one of their crack frontline units, attacked the center of the 24th Division line in an attempt to cross the Nakdong River and penetrate the Pusan Perimeter. At the strategic level, intelligence knew the major unit identifications, locations, and intentions to continue the attack. At the tactical level very little intelligence was available and the picture was not clear at all. Precise information on sub units strength, locations, and equipment were for the most part unknown.

Tactical intelligence reported from units in contact, patrols, refugee and prisoner of war (PW) interrogations, and aerial reconnaissance only provided a partial picture of what faced the 24th Division from its positions along the Nakdong River. It was known that the NKA had nearly depleted its stocks and exhausted its men from their victorious roll from the 38th parallel southward. The NKA had chosen not to establish a logistics tail. The North Korean soldiers were required to live off the land or what they could carry on their backs. However, the continual appearance of heavy weapons and equipment, albeit some captured, confounded U.S. expectations. Likewise, the tenacity of the NKA soldier and ingenuity of the officers surprised the U.S. again and again. The North Koreans used special units to infiltrate behind friendly lines and conduct guerilla-type operations, especially targeted against lines of communications (LOC's). In addition to these special units at the Nakdong River, the regular NKA Divisions sought to push regular line battalions across in hasty crossings over the river in order to seize the high terrain that would cover the natural fording sites. The infiltration of these regular and irregular forces behind U.S. lines took advantage of the mass refugee problem facing the UN forces. The NKA soldiers masked themselves among the refugees and hid weapons and equipment in handcarts. The North Koreans also took full advantage of the dark nights and rugged terrain to slip into friendly lines.

The weather worked hardships on both sides. The blistering hot days caused a toll of heat exhaustion and dehydration to North Koreans, South Koreans, and U.S. troops alike. Perhaps because of the poor physical conditioning and not being acclimated to the country, the American soldiers suffered the most. The lack of

preparation for war in the troops stationed in occupation duties in Japan or shipped from the states would tell not only in combatting the enemy but equally in adjusting to the weather, terrain, and stress of combat. As a paradox, the days of hot, dry weather worked a hardship on the soldiers but kept the few existing roads and trails passable; however, when the rains did come, they relieved the heat but the roads became impassable and thus threatened the supply lifeline of the units.

The terrain also served to work against the Americans and was to the advantage of the attacking North Koreans. U.S. troops were obviously unfamiliar with Korean topography and Korean place names. Maps, while available, did not easily point out key terrain features such as fords or the difficulty of the hilly terrain. The Nakdong River was an identifiable defense line. The U.S. set up on the south and east banks and attempted to control dominating hills overlooking the river. However, the river in itself was not a natural obstacle. It varied in width from fifty meters to two hundred and in depth from 1 to 5 meters. It was not a fast flowing river, thus, it was possible to make log rafts and pole across with little difficulty. The North Koreans also built underwater bridges, consisting of sandbags, logs, and rocks. These bridges were just below the surface of the river and in the slow moving water were not easily spotted. In effect, these shallow fords were difficult for aerial spotters to mark and were not easily engaged or destroyed by artillery or air attack. Though this underwater bridge tactic had been used extensively by the Soviets in the Second World War, their use here by the NKA was a surprise and showed ingenuity. By the use of these bridges, the NKA were able to transport large quantities of troops, heavy weapons and equipment across the Nakdong River into their bridgehead in the Pusan Perimeter.

An example of a typical NKA operation that fully exploited the terrain occurred in the 24th Division sector. The enemy constructed two of the underwater bridges that could not be knocked out. Friendly defensive positions were located along the east bank of the river on terrain features which averaged slightly over two hundred meters in height. However, NKA units infiltrated across the Nakdong by swimming and rafting to seize the dominating terrain features that overlooked the crossing sites and fords. Enemy forces thus were able to seize the dominating terrain behind friendly frontline defenses and effectively cut off friendly reinforcements. Mass crossings by the remainder of the 4th NK Division could not be stopped because artillery fire could not be observed and the crossing sites were not registered. U.S. troops thus had to attack uphill against a determined and experienced force who had ample time to prepare defensive positions. The rugged terrain, enemy night attacks, and poor physical condition of the American soldiers worked against dislodging the NKA bridgehead.

In the division sector was the one main road that paralleled the defensive positions along the Nakdong River. The Hyonpung-Changyong-Yongsan-Miryang (See Map 2) road was a dirt surface, dry weather road, not constructed to bear heavy military



traffic. There were only two branch roads leading from the main road towards the river. These were both only one way and impassable to all traffic during the rainstorms. Although other trails had been hacked out of the sides of the hills throughout the sector, any rainfall made them likewise impassable.

In the center of the division sector, just west of Changyong, was a large lake surrounded by swampland and rice paddies. There was no definite system of compartments or corridors, but more of a maze of both. Thus the sector was generally one of relatively low rolling hills overlooking the slow moving narrow and shallow river. The existing road net was inadequate, so the importance of the main road was significantly increased.

The operational highlight of this period of the defense of the Pusan perimeter was the series of battles for the Naktong Bulge. The NK 4th Division and the U.S. 24th Division engaged in fierce attacks and counterattacks. The North Korean objective was to cross the Naktong River, penetrate U.S. defensive lines, attack to destroy rear echelon units, and proceed to Pusan. The 24th's mission was to defend the perimeter and counterattack to force the NKA to withdraw back across to the west bank of the Naktong River.

Initially, the 24th was given the mission to rest and reorganize. During the previous 18 days of fighting, the division had suffered 30% casualties and had lost 50-75% of its equipment. However, events during the next few days were to prevent the division from obtaining any rest or reorganization.

During the night of 5-6 August, the enemy succeeded in crossing the Naktong River with a force estimated at two battalions. Although the crossings were effected at several points throughout the division sector, the main effort was made in the 34th Regimental Combat Team(RCT) sector. Here the enemy force gained a foothold on the east bank with the furthestmost point of penetration being the high ground vicinity 1144-1388(see map 3). The 6th and 7th of August saw those two enemy battalions maintain their foothold and establish a series of strong points on the highground to the east of the river. However, in the sector of the 17th ROK Regiment, which was attached to the 24th Division, three attempted crossings of the Naktong River by the enemy were broken up by friendly artillery fire. There was no evidence that any enemy force succeeded in reaching the east bank. In the 3rd Bn 21st Infantry Regiment sector, the enemy engaged only in patrolling activity. The 34th RCT sector continued to be the center of enemy activity during 8 to 9 August. North Korean units continued unobserved crossings and reinforced the forces already on the east bank of the Naktong River. Friendly forces came under fire from enemy artillery batteries located to the west of the river. These fires ranged even to the 24th Division CP, which received sporadic unobserved fire. The principal problem facing the frontline units was mostly one of an extended frontage to be covered by whatever troops were on hand and available. Along the Naktong River, the 24th Division had over 43 miles of front to defend with only three badly depleted regiments composed of just two battalions each. Of necessity, flanks were

left exposed which allowed the enemy to easily infiltrate at night and then make envelopments to strike at artillery position, CP's, or supply installations in the division rear.

Despite all the shortcomings, the American soldier responded in exemplary fashion. While it is often said that it was General Walker's personal strength of character that willed the UN forces to hold the Pusan perimeter, it must never be overlooked that it was the force of will, strength, and character of every American and South Korean soldier that together fought and held the line. The enemy was particularly caught off balance by counterattacks such as the one launched by the 9th RCT of the 2nd Division which was also attached to the 24th Division. This counterattack successfully retook some ground but could not dislodge the enemy from his strong points along the river.

The 24th Division's subunits also played vital roles. The 24th Reconnaissance Company (24th Recon) had successfully defended along the Nakdong River west of Changyang between two of the division's regiments before it was relocated to the vicinity of Yongsan on 9 August. The 24th Recon was then ordered to patrol and make contact with the 25th Division to the south along the road that ran south of Yongsan toward Masan. Contact was to be established where the road crossed the Nam River. Although the 24th Recon met only minor enemy fire on the 10th of August, the next engagement was to precipitate the rear area action that is the focus of this battle analysis. Enemy forces that had continued to cross the Nakdong River and infiltrate through U.S. lines were to first encounter elements of the 24th Recon at Nonni (see map 2). The enemy intent seemed to be to sever the north-south spur road that connected the 24th and 25th Divisions at their boundary near the Nam River. Having done this the enemy would then proceed east to further disrupt LOC's. Already, the personnel of the Division's Headquarters Company were being utilized to form and maintain a perimeter defense for the Division CP. These soldiers had not fought with enemy troops since the start of the war. These men formed into a task force and under command of Captain Hafeman, Headquarters Company Commander, along with rear echelon troops from the military police, signal, ordnance and military band were to engage in a brief but intense rear area operation to secure the LOC from the Division CP to the frontline units. While these few days of action are lost in the larger battles of the Nakdong Bulge and the overall defense of the Pusan Perimeter, the action exemplifies the intensity of the combat and resourcefulness of the U.S. forces.

While other actions such as the U.S. counterattacks at the Cloverleaf and Obong-ni received much of the accolades for the holding and eventual breakout from the Pusan Perimeter, the small brief contacts such as the one described herein significantly contributed to the success of the operations. By no means were the actions of Task Force Hafeman or any of the other units involved of singular importance but the tenacity shown by these "noncombat" rear area soldiers was noteworthy.

#### Section 4: The Fight

Throughout 11 August 1950, Major General Church, the Commander of the 24th Infantry Division, made several decisions to bolster the US positions in the division rear area and along the main supply route (MSR). Intelligence reports indicated a sizable enemy force had penetrated the front lines of the division, crossed the Naktang River and were headed to the east to interdict the division lines of communication, the CP, and the division rear area.

To eliminate enemy roadblocks along the MSR, the division commander directed the organization of a task force comprised of the division support troops under the command of the division Headquarters Company Commander, Captain George B. Hafeman. The mission of TF HAFEMAN as described in the 24th Infantry Division Order, dated 112400 Aug 1950, was to establish roadblocks along the MSR to eliminate the threat of the enemy moving down the high speed approach into the division rear area, the command post, and the division supply base at Miryang. Captain Hafeman selected volunteers to man the roadblocks and outposts. His volunteers came from the division support units, to include the 24th MP Company, the 24th Signal Company, the 24th Division Band, and the 724th Ordnance Maintenance Company. (In addition, some South Korean Police, normally assigned to control displaced civilians, aided in the security mission.) The hastily organized task force quickly adopted the fighting spirit and at 0500 hours on 11 August, set out to reconnoiter the MSR from the division command post to Yongsan.

Shortly after the departure of TF HAFEMAN from the division CP, the 24th Recon Company, operating in the vicinity of Yongsan; Simgoni; and Non-Ni, reported that two of their roadblocks, established earlier that day, spotted a North Korean force. The 24th Recon Company made contact with the enemy and repulsed 50-100 NK near Tocha-Ni at 0740 hours and another 50-75 NK soldiers at Non-ni at 0830 hours.

Meanwhile, TF HAFEMAN moved quickly from its CP position, westward along the MSR, to Yongsan without incident. Arriving around 0900 hours and aware of the enemy activity in the 24th Recon Company sector, TF HAFEMAN moved back down the MSR (moving east) to the Simgoni area. At 0930 hours, Captain Hafeman led his force out of Simgoni, down the roads and trails toward Non-Ni to secure a physical linkup with the 24th Recon Company. The task force advanced a distance of about two miles to within 500 yards of the Non-Ni when they encountered heavy enemy concentrations. (See reference map 3.) TF HAFEMAN quickly established hasty defensive positions. Captain Hafeman realized his force of volunteers was no match for the North Korean strength. He organized a quick reconnaissance party of four men and led them from their hasty defensive positions, through sporadic sniper fires, to the 24th Recon.

After explaining the situation to Captain Kearns, Commander of

the 24th Recon Company, Captain Hafeman again maneuvered his recon team back to the task force position. TF HAFEMAN broke contact with the enemy and moved back up the trail to the vicinity of Simgoni where it established a roadblock and a defensive position (TF position #1 - see reference map 3). A second defensive position and roadblock was established 500 yards east of Simgoni (TF position #2). After reorganizing his force, Captain Hafeman notified the division CP (1600 hours) that 200+ North Korean soldiers were between grid coordinates 1153.1-1383.7 and 1151.8-1383.4 and another group of approximately 200 North Koreans was moving north toward the MSR.

While the division troops under Captain Hafeman reconnoitered the area along the MSR and the trails southwest from Simgoni toward Non-Ni, other combat support units received instructions for a new mission. At 11100 August, the 21st Infantry Regiment alerted the 14th Engineer Combat Battalion (ECB) for possible employment as Infantry. Immediately, the battalion commander, Major Miller, organized his unit for combat. At this point, they were not aware of the major role they would play in the defense of the MSR.

At 2000 hours Major Miller received the order to move all available personnel to the 34th Infantry Regimental Command Post. While the officers and men of the 14th ECB moved to the 34th Infantry CP in Yongsan, Major Miller called MG Church and received his order to keep the MSR clear by placing four (4) roadblocks along a three mile stretch of the road from Yongsan east toward TF HAFEMAN. Major Miller instructed Captain Gass of A Company to organize the battalion elements into small units and move to locations along the road. (See reference map.) His orders to the units were simple - divide the Headquarters and Service Company soldiers, to include staff sections and cooks (a total of roughly 80 soldiers), and provide the following roadblocks: LT Henderson of Headquarters Company and seventeen (17) enlisted men would establish roadblock #1; LT Moore of Headquarters Company would take fifteen (15) enlisted men and establish roadblock #2; LT McMillan of Company A and twenty-four (24) men would establish roadblock #3; and LT Martin of Company A would move with twenty-five (25) enlisted men to establish roadblock #4. (Roadblock #4 was approximately 1/2 mile west of TF HAFEMAN's position along the division MSR.) A Jeep patrol of four enlisted men, under the control of Corporal Hurst was ordered to check the roadblock positions once each hour. Captain Gass started placing the roadblocks into position at 2130 hours. The last roadblock was in position at 2330 hours. The remaining battalion officers of the 14th ECB remained in the 34th Infantry CP to provide communications and liaison functions. (See ENDNOTE #1.)

The engineer jeep patrol was the first to make contact with the enemy. For the first hour of 12 August, the patrol reported no activity. Roadblocks were in place with limited radio capabilities between positions. (See ENDNOTE #2.) At 0130 hours Corporal Hurst and the jeep patrol departed the 14th ECB Command Post in the vicinity of Yongsan to make another hourly check of the roadblocks. In sequence, he passed through each of the roadblocks moving

east along the road from Yongsan to Miryang. He arrived at roadblock #4 (LT Martin's position) without incident at 0230 hours. After a brief discussion with LT Martin, the jeep patrol began its return trip back to Yongsan by moving west along Yongsan - Miryang road. The patrol moved through roadblock #3 without incident and continued on toward roadblock #2.

At approximately 0225 hours two medics came into LT Moore's position at roadblock #2 and reported that their ambulances were hit by automatic weapons fire between roadblocks #2 and #3 vicinity 1152.7 - 1387.4. (The two ambulances were moving from east to west ahead of and out of visual contact with the jeep patrol.) Around 0300 hours one ambulance, loaded with the wounded men of both ambulances arrived at LT Moore's position. The driver of the ambulance provided the details about the enemy ambush during which the driver of the second ambulance was killed. The second ambulance was damaged beyond immediate repair; all the patients and aid men were loaded onto the remaining ambulance which continued down the road to Yongsan.

At about the same time, the jeep patrol came under enemy automatic weapons fire. The jeep driver, Corporal Dallas, was wounded instantly. The members of the patrol moved CPL Dallas to a safe position under the jeep and quickly found cover nearby. Another member of the patrol, Private First Class Guri, exfiltrated from the ambush site and arrived at roadblock #2 at 0330 hours with the news of the enemy attack. (See ENDNOTE #3).

Without radio communications, LT Moore (at roadblock #2) had to rely on a messenger to report the activity in his area. He sent Corporal Saunders in a 2 1/2 ton truck to inform Major Martin of the incident. Moving to the west and passing through roadblock #1, CPL Saunders briefed LT Henderson on the situation with the ambulances, then continued on to find Major Miller and report the incident.

For the 14th ECB the ambush of the ambulances and the jeep patrol was only the beginning of a long day of fighting for control of the Key Yongsan-Miryang Road. At about 0520 hours on 12 August, the enemy began an assault on roadblock #4. Two machine guns and several rifles opened fire. After taking considerable fire from the enemy, LT Martin decided he did not have sufficient firepower attacking North Koreans. LT Martin decided to split his force. For the safety of his men, he directed them to move approximately 1/2 mile to the east to link up with what he thought was an infantry platoon; in fact it was the composite force of TF HAFEMAN. Since there was no effective communications between roadblocks, LT Martin decided to go forward to inform roadblock #3 of the enemy activity. After his men departed toward TF HAFEMAN, LT Martin took SGT Chapman and Corporal Aspden in a jeep and headed west toward LT McMillan's position at roadblock #3 to warn him of the threat along the MSR and to inform him that roadblock #4 was no longer occupied. LT Martin's men, led by SGT Churchill maneuvered to the east along the MSR toward TF HAFEMAN from 0520 hours until 1600 hours under sporadic enemy fires. Without communications, neither could warn the other of the 150 man enemy force that separated them.

As he left his position at roadblock #4, LT Martin was unaware of the activity developing at roadblock #3. Throughout the night, roadblock #3 received sporadic enemy fires. At 0600 hours, immediately prior to LT Martin's arrival, the enemy opened up on the position with automatic weapons, rifles and hand grenades, killing LT McMillan and three enlisted men. (See ENDNOTE #4.) As he approached, the enemy ambushed LT Martin's jeep taking him and SGT Chapman prisoner. (CPL Aspden was apparently killed when the jeep crashed as a result of the enemy ambush.) Taking command of the surviving members of roadblock #3, SGT Kavetsky led eight men out of roadblock #3 under enemy fires, and set a course for roadblock #2. The move proved fatal to all but SGT Kavetsky. Each member of the patrol, except SGT Kavetsky, was killed by sniper fire while enroute to roadblock #2. The sergeant took cover in a rice paddy where he hid until he was recovered by a personnel carrier at 1645 hours the same day.

The developing action along the MSR increased the need for communications between the roadblocks and back to the CP. LT Powers and LT Buffington, both of Headquarters and Service Company, departed the 34th Regimental CP and moved to roadblock #1 to begin the task of repairing the communications and to locate the jeep patrol. At 0300 hours 12 August, about the same time the ambulances and jeep patrol were engaged, the activity around roadblock #1 was relatively light. LT Henderson advised Powers and Buffington not to go forward until day-break because of flares he saw earlier in the vicinity of roadblock #3. At 0600 hours the two lieutenants moved forward to roadblock #2 where they were informed about the jeep patrol and the capture of LT Martin and SGT Chapman. After reporting the incident to Major Miller via the radio, LT Buffington tried to fix the head space of the thirty caliber machine gun at roadblock #2. An enemy machine gun opened up on the position, hitting LT Buffington three times. He was immediately evacuated by jeep without correcting the communications problems. (See ENDNOTE #5.)

The enemy unit of 150 North Koreans which forced LT Martin to evacuate position #4 earlier in the morning, continued to attack down the MSR to the east toward Miryang and into the defensive positions of TF HAFEMAN. (See ENDNOTE #6.) By 0630 hours, 12 August, Captain Hafeman was cut off on both sides - unable to move toward Yongsan in the west or Miryang in the east. Communications between the two TF positions went out. At 0830 hours Captain Hafeman ordered a motorized patrol of three vehicles to break through the attacking enemy and on to the TF position to the east (TF position #2 - See reference map 3). Each of the vehicles was armed with a .50 cal machine gun, a Browning Automatic Rifle and small arms. At 0900 hours the patrol departed eastward along the MSR and into the enemy roadblock. Under intense enemy machine gun fire, the patrol successfully ran the enemy roadblock and made it to position #2 at 0935 hours, reporting the loss of three casualties plus damage to one jeep and a .50 cal. Enemy casualties were reported at three snipers killed and a machine gun position knocked out. The road between the two

positions appeared to be free of enemy forces. At 1000 hours a resupply of small arms ammunition, hand grenades and mortar ammunition managed to make it up the MSR to TF HAFEMAN, position #2. Captain Hafeman ordered the return of the motorized patrol with all the ammunition. The patrol loaded the ammunition and departed TF position #2 to the west along the MSR toward TF position #1. The patrol was surprised by the enemy which had reconstituted its force covering the MSR. Although the road itself was clear, enemy small arms fire covered the road and harassed the patrol along the entire stretch of the MSR between the two roadblock positions. The patrol suffered no additional casualties.

The 24th Recon Company was experiencing a greater threat at the western end of the MSR near Yongsan. The enemy had interdicted the 21st Infantry in positions around Yongsan throughout the night and early morning of 12 August. An observed force of 200 North Koreans maneuvered to the high ground around Yongsan, pushing the Infantry out of their positions, and establishing a roadblock at 1153.3 - 1387.3 on the MSR between the 24th Recon Company sector the stretch of road patrolled by the 14th ECB. Between 0600-0700 hours on 12 August, LT Coghill, the Executive Officer for 24th Recon, and SGT Keelen, the Communications Chief, ran the enemy roadblock in a 1/4 ton truck in an effort to link up with the company command post in Yongsan. LT Coghill was severely injured during the operation (see ENDNOTE #7), but ordered his driver to continue on to the company roadblock just outside the city. Shortly after LT Coghill arrived and explained the disposition at the enemy roadblock, Captain Cody of Company F, 9th Infantry reported to the 24th Recon Company position with a mission to attack the enemy on the high ground to the rear of the company position and the left of the MSR. The 24th Recon Company received the mission to clear the MSR using attachments from F Company and organic systems of the reconnaissance unit. The 24th Recon would begin their mission as soon as possible while Captain Cody and the remainder of Company F would wait for the cover of darkness.

Master Sergeant Montee was designated the commander for the road clearing operation. His mission was to attack and destroy the enemy roadblock. If the roadblock could not be destroyed, he was to return to the company and report the disposition of the enemy. If he could clear the roadblock, he was to continue along the MSR to link up with TF HAFEMAN. M/Sergeant Montee organized his attack force with two rifle squads (from Company F, 9th Infantry), two M24 tanks and two M39 personnel carriers. They prepared to move out while the 14th ECB prepared for a new mission.

At noon Major Miller, Commander of the 14th Engineer (Combat) Battalion, arrived at the 34th Infantry Regimental command post where he received a new mission. His units along the MSR had suffered significant losses throughout the early hours of 12 August. At this point on the 12th, they manned only two of the four roadblocks initially established. The 14th ECB was released of their responsibility to secure the MSR and ordered to move to new locations outside of Yongsan. LT Henderson and the members of roadblock #1 assumed positions northeast of Yongsan from

which they would deny the enemy and civilians access to a draw leading to the south down the hill to the MSR. LT Moore and his men at roadblock #2 were relieved by LTC Smith at 1530 hours and joined LT Henderson at 1630 hours in positions atop the hill overlooking Yongsan and the MSR.

M/SGT Montee departed on his mission to attack the enemy roadblock immediately after the engineers vacated their roadblock positions on the MSR. Montee's combat team eliminated the enemy roadblock and continued, as ordered, to link up with TF HAFEMAN at its western most position (1156.0-1387.2). One noncommissioned officer, a rifle squad leader, was killed in the action. The team received special congratulations from the Assistant Division Commander, BG Menoher, who then ordered the combat team to remain with TF HAFEMAN to help defeat an even greater enemy threat emerging in front of the task force.

Due to the mounting enemy threat, at 1330 hours the G-3 approved Captain Hafeman's request to withdraw his TF position #1. At approximately 1530 hours, Captain Hafeman relocated his 81-mm mortar and 200 rounds of ammunition to a supporting position east of the pass in range to support the forward position. He then gave the order for all elements of position #1 to withdraw to the new position near the pass. His instructions were very direct; all soldiers were to infiltrate back to the new TF position fifteen minutes prior to the movement of any vehicle in order for the soldiers to cover the move of the vehicles. The move included all members of TF HAFEMAN, the members of M/SGT Montee's combat team, two members of the 14th ECB (SGT Kavetsky and another), as well as, the two tanks and one remaining personnel carrier of the 24th Recon Company. By 1600 hours, all elements of TF position #1 closed in the new position and took up fighting positions left and right of the pass. Activities throughout the afternoon were conducted under enemy fire. The task force lost one KIA, two seriously wounded and eight men slightly wounded, to include three South Korean police who were members of the task force. Enemy casualties were estimated between forty and sixty KIA.

The enemy continued to pressure TF HAFEMAN. At 1800 hours Captain Hafeman reorganized his forces, now approximately 135 strong due to the addition of the combat team from the 24th Recon Company. He positioned five outposts to the right and left of the pass along the MSR. All remaining troops were moved to a second position near a pass in the vicinity of Hagongni. (See reference map 3.) At this point CPT Hafeman released the MPs to their parent unit. He then departed the outpost position to return to G-3 to brief elements of the 23rd Infantry which were preparing to attack through TF HAFEMAN with a mission of defeating the remaining enemy along the MSR between Miryang and Yongsan.

Sometime between 1600 and 2030 hours, enemy forces moved back onto the MSR and established another roadblock. The 24th Recon Company from the vicinity of Yongsan, organized a second combat team to eliminate the threat. LT Steed was assigned two M24 tanks, one M39 personnel carrier and six riflemen with a mission to neutralize the roadblock and return to the company position. The



team moved out at 2030 hours and engaged the enemy. The combat team was unsuccessful in clearing the enemy roadblock; however, LT Steed pursued the fleeing enemy, continued eastward and joined TF HAFEMAN at the new position (vicinity 1156.0-1387.2). Due to darkness and the inability to use the tank weapons at night, LT Steed remained with TF HAFEMAN.

Enemy activity was light for the remainder of the night. While TF HAFEMAN, the 14th Engineer (Combat) Battalion and the 24th Recon Company rested, the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry prepared to assume the fight to control the MSR. The following morning at 0500 hours, the Infantry battalion moved through TF HAFEMAN's positions and down the MSR to the west. This operation ended the rear area defense role for TF HAFEMAN. At 0900 hours, 13 August 1950, TF HAFEMAN was dissolved. After a valient effort in combat roles, the combat service support soldiers of TF HAFEMAN returned to their duties in the division command post, while the members of the 14th Engineer (Combat) Battalion, 24th Reconnaissance Company, and Company F, 9th Infantry continued in their defense of the Yongsan area.

## ENDNOTES

1. Based on the personal recollections of COL William T. Moore, USA (Ret), then LT Moore assigned to roadblock #2, the 14th ECB was extremely short of personnel. The battalion was not thoroughly trained as Infantry. The personnel assigned to the roadblocks met each other for the first time as they moved to the roadblock location. "We were put out in position with the mission of stopping the enemy. It was pitch dark and couldn't have been more confusing." The soldiers carried their entrenching tools and weapons; no other equipment or materials were available for constructing a roadblock.

2. The communications equipment consisted primarily of walkie-talkies which were unreliable due to the range and terrain.

3. CPL Dallas was the regular driver for LT Powers. In his account of the action, COL Powers stated that the report of the ambush included the fact that CPL Dallas' body was later found "draped over the engine compartment with hood up" ... "to give the appearance that he was trying to fix the motor. The enemy had hoped that this would attract help from any passing US troops."

4. COL Moore was told LT McMillan and three enlisted men were found with their hands tied and single shots in the back of their heads.

5. Colonel, then Lieutenant, Moore assisted a soldier in loading LT Buffington into a jeep. COL Moore recalls that a few minutes before Lt Buffington was hit, a US recon unit moved into a larger hill across the road. After the North Korean machine gun fired on roadblock #2, the recon unit opened up with automatic weapons and silenced the enemy machine gun. COL Moore recalls that hundreds of Korean refugees were crossing south side of his position and, apparently, the North Korean machine gunner moved in close by mixing with the refugees.

6. The term 'TF position' refers to the defensive positions of TF HAFEMAN; the 14th ECB positions are referred to as 'roadblocks'.

7. COL William F. Coghill, USA (Ret), was seriously wounded in his successful attempt to run the enemy roadblock. He recalled that the division CP was unaware of the enemy roadblock. He knew he had to get through to report the enemy position to his company commander. He was wounded in the lower leg with a .51 caliber AT round that shattered his knee and came out about ten inches above the knee. In all, the jeep had sixty-six bullet holes in it when it reached the 24th Recon CP. LT Coghill refused medical attention until he could brief the company commander on

the situation. He was later evacuated to Japan where his lower leg was amputated. For his heroic actions, LT Coghill received the Silver Star Medal; his driver, SGT Keelen received the Bronze Star Medal.

## Section 5: Significance of the Action

When viewed in the context of the entire Korean war, these three days in August and the actions of these men seems trivial indeed. Countless other front line and rear area soldiers will fight gallantly and many will die. However, these days did provide an opportunity to witness anew the gallantry of the American soldier. Whether combat, combat support, or combat service support, these American men learned to fight, fought well and upheld the tough tradition of America's fighting forces.

The actions of TF Hafeman and the 24th Engineers provided not only examples of heroism and bravery but also allowed the 24th Division additional time to reorganize and resupply. After these days, the division was once again able to reestablish and solidify its portion of the perimeter. The long pipeline for supplies from the United States to Korea was beginning its ever increasing flow and the vital last link to the frontline was kept open by these rear area operations.

Guidance concerning rear area operations was contained in FM 100-10 Field Service Regulation and Administration and FM 100-15 Field Service Regulation Service Units. The operable version of FM 100-10 was published in September, 1949 and FM 100-15 was vintage June, 1950. Obviously these manuals were based upon experience gained in World War II, and were not necessarily applicable to the situation operative in Korea. Indeed, with the pace of publication distribution, it is highly doubtful whether the June 1950 edition of FM 100-15 had reached the field.

FM 100-10 was designed to deal with administrative or noncombat operations. Its stated purpose was to provide fundamentals of Army administration in the theater of operations. Paragraphs 128 through 132 provide specific guidance on the defense of rear areas. Communication zone commanders are charged with the overall responsibility for general defense of the rear areas and suitable highly mobile, combat units should be assigned to the communications zone commander for general defense purposes. It must be stressed that every unit commander is responsible for the local defense of his own unit and installation. In this same light, the field manual divides the possible rear area ground threat into local, or close-in defense, and to defense against large scale attack. The assignment of forces to purely defensive missions had to be weighed against friendly unit capabilities, and the anticipated magnitude of the enemy threat.

The doctrine recommended that organizations for defense be established on a territorial basis, with missions and troops assigned to the division commander. These commanders are then to integrate the local defense plans of individual units and installations into the overall general defense plan, and coordinate this plan with adjacent commanders. This would include the Air Force and Navy when applicable. Specific defensive measures recommended include the construction of defensive works, to include

fox holes, road blocks and antitank ditches; improvement of natural obstacles; and the camouflage of installations and work areas. The assignment of engineer troops to the rear area to assist in this work is recommended.

FM 100-15 though primarily dealing with Corps and larger units did provide some guidance concerning protection of lines of communications(LOC). Specifically it was recommended that concentrations of troops be placed between the potential threat and the LOC's; that natural obstacles be used to screen the LOC; that air superiority be achieved and maintained; and that troops be dispersed for protection. A further point is made recommending constant and intensive reconnaissance, with the accuracy of enemy information forming the basis for the best security. FM 100-15 further recommended the use of mobile task forces, strong in antitank and engineer components, as the best type of force for rear area security. As described above, the 24th Division seems to have tried to execute the existing doctrine for rear area operations. Whether this execution was purposely carried out or a chance occasion is not certain.

As learned here at Yongsan and many other places, commanders must be willing to commit every man when the situation dictates. To successfully employ all types of troops to the fight, each soldier must have a thorough understanding of basic infantry tasks. Leaders whether combat, combat support, or combat service support must be prepared to lead and employ fighting men. These men, regardless of rank or specialty, must know how to fire weapons(all types), dig-in, build obstacles, patrol, set ambushes, set outposts/listening posts, communicate, and navigate. Training in these skills might have prevented some mistakes by these soldiers and undoubtedly would have saved numerous lives. Also, training may have strengthened the tactics of the leaders to the point that the success of one vehicle in running the length of a road would not have been interpreted as a guarantee of the security of the route. All of these mistakes and factors point out the overall condition of all U.S. forces during this period of time.

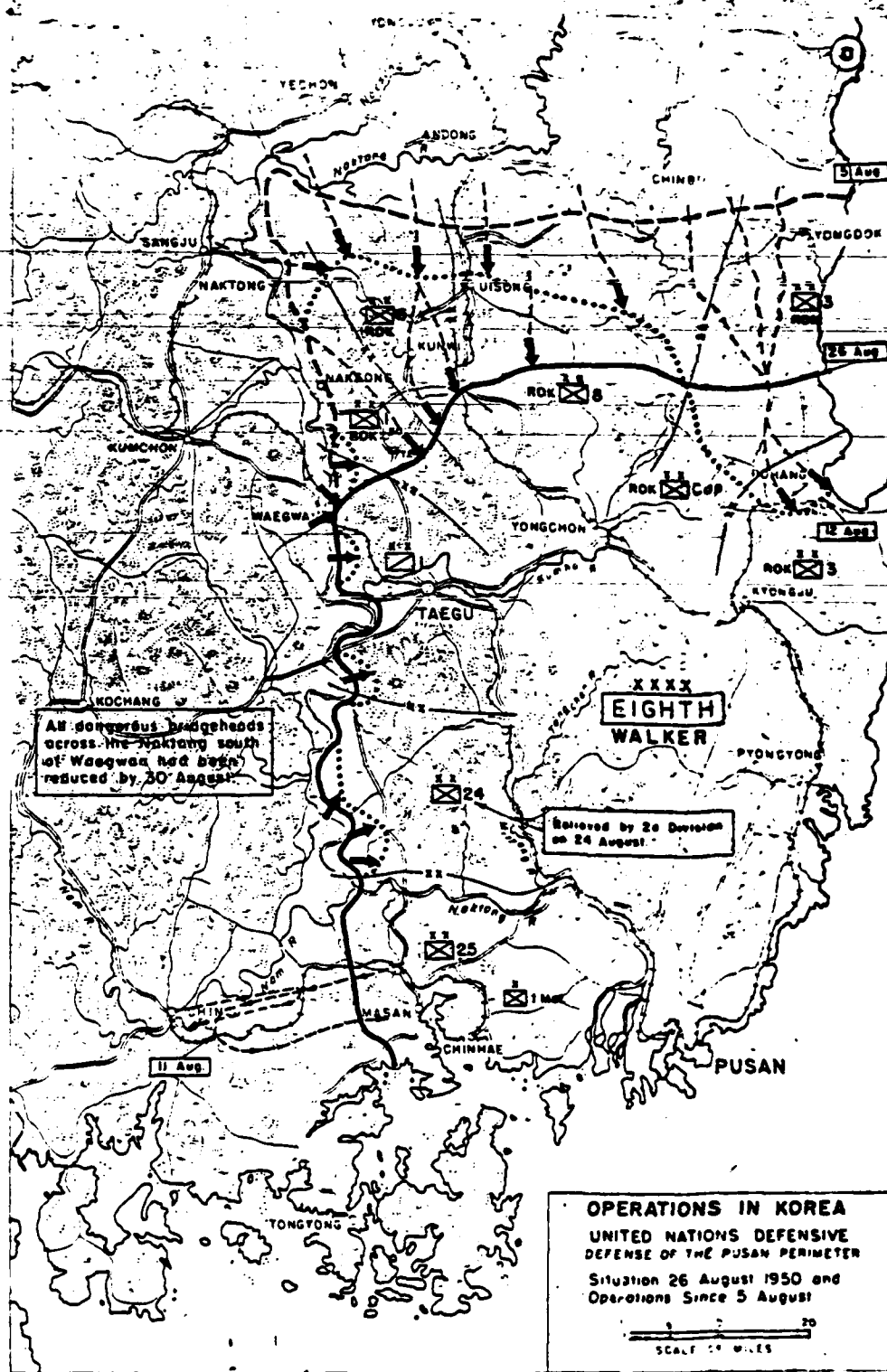
Improved intelligence both before and during the fighting could also have saved lives. Neither TF Hafeman nor the engineers were apparently aware of the situation prior to their commitment. Once the action began, the lateral flow of information between road blocks would have prevented separate vehicles/groups of soldiers from being engaged by the same enemy forces.

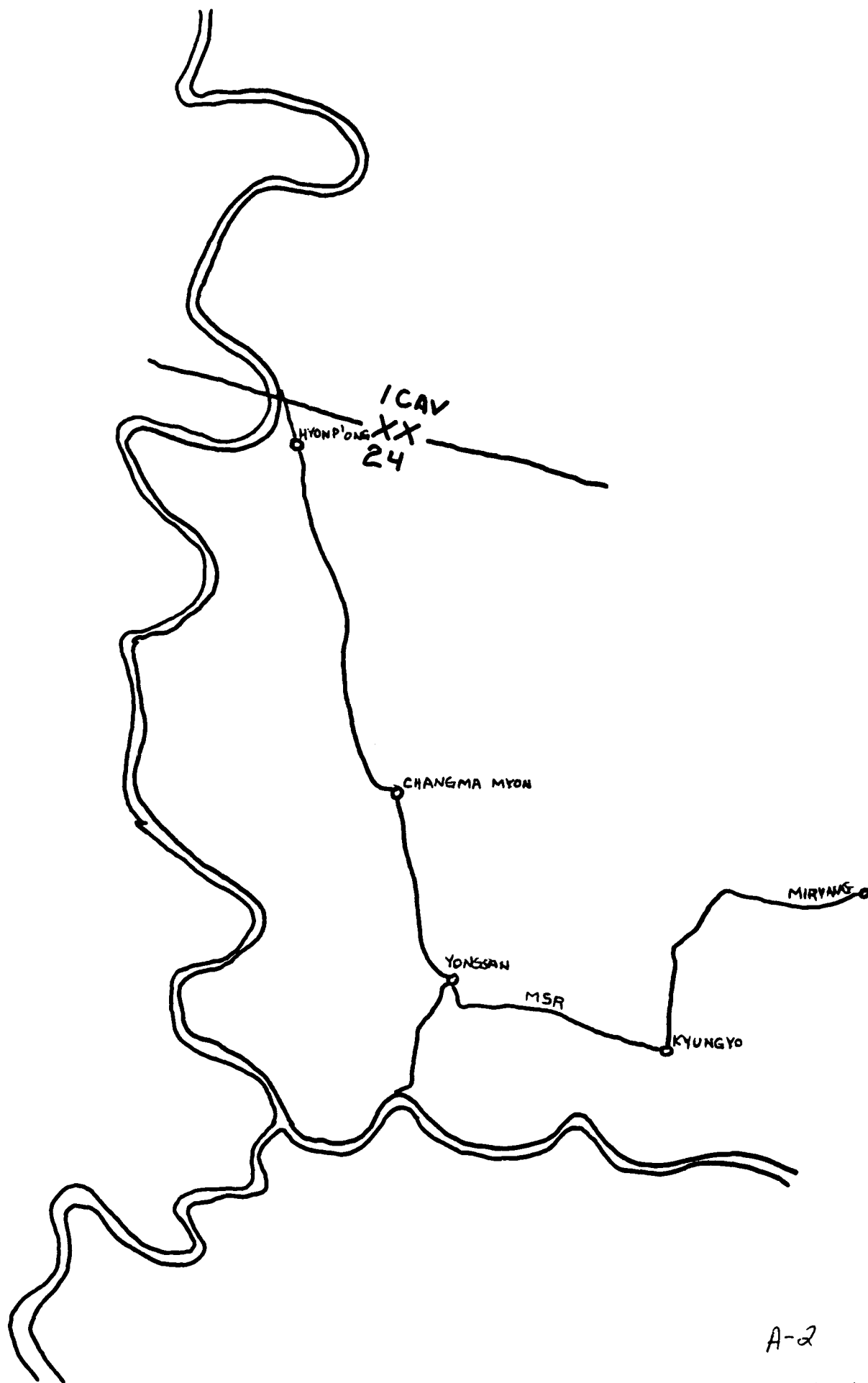
Commanders must also be aware that when support personnel are committed to serve as fighting men, other CS and CSS troops must be assigned the support mission. This was not evident in this action as the engineers and TF Hafeman had difficulty obtaining support for ammunition, mortar rounds, commo, and barrier materials.

Applying this analysis to today's Army, our current doctrine must include the contingency to fight what is now termed as "Level III Rear Area Combat Operations" with augmentation forces composed of CS and CSS forces when shortages of combat forces exist. Readiness training, Army Training and Evaluation Programs, Skill

Qualification Tests and our institutional training must stress to CS and CSS leaders and soldiers the basic infantry fighting skills.

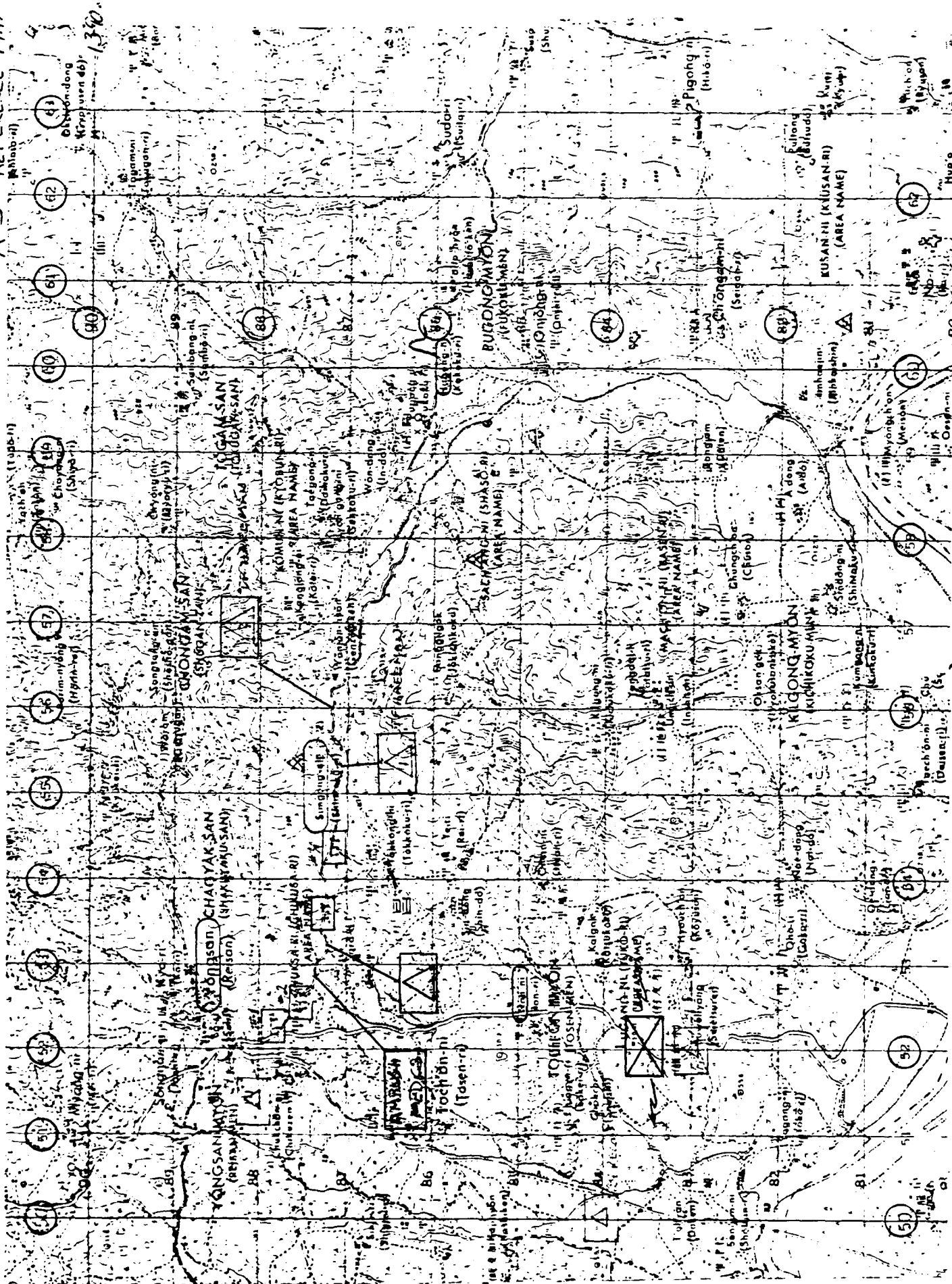
In summary, if the North Koreans had experienced success along the 24th Division's MSR and not met resistance, the fight might well have gone into the command post and support area. With this success would the North Koreans have pulled back as they did later or continued to press their victories is left to conjecture. Regardless, without the rear area operations described here, the 24th's defensive efforts and the eventual fight for Cloverleaf Hill and breakout from the Pusan Perimeter would have been delayed or smothered.







# A 3 - REFERENCE MAP



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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

THE ALASKA RAILROAD

Pouch 7-2111

Anchorage, Alaska 99510 - 7069

May 4, 1984

Major Carl E. Linke  
176 5th Artillery Road  
Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027

Dear Major Linke:

I read with real interest your draft on the 24th Infantry Division military operations in Korea during the period 10 to 13 August 1950. There is a great deal more in your paper than I was aware of as a Lt. in the 24th Recon. Co.

I have marked up your draft in a couple places. In addition I will attempt to recall the situation as I remember it on the days in question. It was interesting to me that you used the actual war diary of the 24th Recon. Co. Since we landed in Korea on July 2, 1950, until I was wounded, most of the war diary was written by me. I wondered whether it survived the rigors of the Nakdong perimeter actions.

The 24th Recon. Co. had been defending along the Nakdong River west of Changnyang between two of the 24th Division Regiments - the 34th on our right and I believe, the 19th on our left. About August 8 we were relieved and pulled back to the vicinity of Changnyang where our Division Forward (Danger Forward) CP was located. We moved into the vicinity of Yongsan about August 9. We made patrol contact with the 25th Division on the road south of Yongsan toward Masan about where it crossed the Nam River which flowed into the Nakdong to the west. As I recall we encountered only minor enemy fire on the 10th, but did receive enemy fire into our position along the road south of Yongsan on the 11th.

On the 11th we received a replacement Lt. for Lt. Kristanoff who was KIA at Taejon. I attempted to take him to one of our platoon positions on the road south of Yongsan, but returned when we came under enemy small arms fire. On the way back to our company CP which was in a school yard near Yongsan, a mortar round landed nearby and a piece of shrapnel tore through the jeep under the back seat but we were not wounded. During the afternoon while transferring ammunition from our ammunition truck, a mortar round landed adjacent to the vehicle wounding the new replacement Lt., our First Sgt. Harold J. Poland and one other EM. I was nearby and assisted in moving the wounded to a Battalion aid station. I am including a copy of the Silver Star award made to Cpl. Harvey B. Williamson of our company for his action in assisting the wounded and extinguishing the fire in the ammunition truck.

On the 11th, I recall encountering Lt. William Carpenter (a West Point classmate of mine) with the 21st Regiment Weapons Company Mortar Platoon, Lt. Carpenter and about 15 or 20 of his men were being used as infantry to defend a road block along the road south of Yongsan in the direction of the Nam River armed almost exclusively with just .45 caliber automatic pistols.

During the night of August 11, probably around midnight, I left our CP near Yongsan in a jeep with Sgt. James P. Keelen, our communications Sgt. as driver and we proceeded east along the MSR to Miryang to report to the Division Rear CP (Danger Rear) at Miryang. We knew that a sizable North Korean force had infiltrated between the 25th Division and 24th Division near the junction of the Nam and Nakdong Rivers and moved east, probably to attack our supply routes. We based this on small arm fire on the 10th, however, we lacked any reliable G-2 type information. I provided what information I had to the staff at Miryang CP, but I recall the situation was confusing.

Action was ongoing at the Miryang CP to pull together as many rear echelon troops as possible from the MP Company, Signal Company, Band and Ordnance Company and organize them into a task force to defend the MSR. Sgt. Keelen and I ate some hot food including the first fresh meat since we had been in Korea, then slept a couple hours alongside the jeep and after a final check with the CP staff, headed back along the MSR to our 24th Recon. position in the vicinity of Yongsan. I note that your writeup indicates I ran the enemy roadblock at 0900 hours. I question this timing as I believe it was at daybreak between 0600 and 0700 hours. As we proceeded west along the Muryang-Yongsan road I talked to several members of the 14th ECB, but was unable to get any reliable data on the enemy whereabouts. At one point a 2 1/2 ton truck belonging to the 14th ECB lay in the ditch alongside the road where it had been ambushed that morning.

We received sporadic small arms fire as daylight broke, and then quite suddenly found ourselves in a road block situation with increased machine gun fire mostly from just south of the road. I needed to reach our main company position just east of Yongsan and relay the information on the enemy road block as well as pass on intelligence data from the Division Staff, so we continued west attempting to run the enemy position. Division Rear staff, at that line, believed the MSR was secure being defended by the 14th ECB and the special rear echelon task force. Such was not the case as I soon found out.

I received a direct hit with the shell coming through the jeep into my left leg midway between the ankle and knee shattering the knee and passing out about ten inches above the knee. We stopped in a depression in the road so we were in defilade from enemy fire long enough for me to apply a tourniquet using my belt. We then made a dash through rather heavy enemy fire to the 24th Recon. position. I believe the projectile that hit me was from a shoulder fired anti-tank .51 caliber (2.64 I believe) of the type in the picture enclosed. I have a letter from Cpt. John Kearns, the 24th Recon. Company Commander that says they located four .51 caliber anti-tank weapons, three .50 caliber machine guns and two .30 caliber machine guns in this road block after it was eliminated. In our dash to the company position, I also received a minor flesh wound in my right thigh and the binoculars that hung on my chest was shattered. Miraculously Sgt. Keelen was not hit even though the Jeep received a total of 66 bullet holes.

Upon arriving at my Company CP, I informed Cpt. Kearns of the enemy positions. He offered to put me in the one remaining M-24 tank and send me back through the roadblock to our hospital unit at Miryang. I declined as I did not feel we could breach the enemy roadblock. I was transported west and then north to a Battalion aid station where I received a permanent tourniquet

and a couple pints of blood. I was placed in an ambulance, and personally directed the driver along a route north that took us to Changnyang and into the 1st Cavalry Division zone and then east through their MSR and eventually to the Mash unit at Miryang. Twice along the way bullets penetrated the ambulance, however, I don't know that they were from enemy fire. A couple days later I was evacuated by train to Pusan, and then by Japanese freighter around the southern tip of Japan to arrive at Yokohama on August 18. Because of the gangrenous condition of my leg, I was immediately operated on and my leg amputated in a tent on the pier at Yokohama and later moved to the military hospital at Yokohama. Two months later I was in Walter Reed Hospital. I returned to duty after 14 months in Walter Reed. I retired from active duty in August 1975, as a Colonel in the position of Chief of Staff of the Army Forces in Alaska. Since then I have been Manager of Planning for The Alaska Railroad.

I believe the Lt. Sneed you mention of the 24th Recon. Co. was Lt. Bacil Hudson Steed. Recently I received the following address:

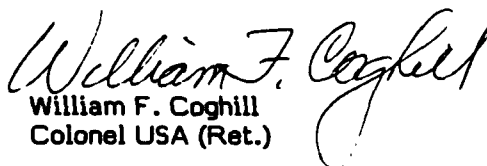
Bacil Hudson Steed  
Imex Trading Co.  
79 Henbury Ave.  
Darwin N.T. 5792  
Australia

This is James P. Keelen's address:

229 Old York Road  
Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807

This has been a hurried account but I hope it will help. I would appreciate receiving a copy of your completed product.

Sincerely,

  
William F. Coghill  
Colonel USA (Ret.)

W. F. Coghill  
7005 Fredricks Dr.  
Anchorage, AK. 99504

Enclosures:

Silver Star Award - Coghill  
Silver Star Award - Williamson  
Bronze Star Writeup - Keelen  
Anti-tank weapon and Coghill

HEADQUARTERS 24TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO 24

GENERAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 111

30 August 1950

SILVER STAR-----Awards-----Section I  
REVOCATION OF GENERAL ORDERS-----II

SILVER STAR.---By direction of the President under the provisions of the act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (U.S. Bul. 43, 1918), and pursuant to authority in AR 600-45, the Silver Star for gallantry in action is awarded to the following named officers and enlisted men:

First Lieutenant George W. Kristanoff, 01336515, Infantry, United States Army, a member of 24th Reconnaissance Company, 24th Infantry Division, is awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action near Taejon, Korea on 19 July 1950. Lieutenant Kristanoff was given the mission of determining the strength and location of an enemy unit which was reported as operating 6 miles south of Taejon. With a patrol of 19 men in 4 jeeps he proceeded about 6 miles when he encountered an enemy road block. During this time he maintained radio contact with his company command post. His patrol engaged the enemy road block and during the engagement he reported that he was also attacked from the rear. With complete disregard for his own safety Lieutenant Kristanoff remained at his radio and gave full information as to the enemy's disposition and location. As a result of the information given by Lieutenant Kristanoff, reinforcements were dispatched to the scene of the action and held off the enemy during the night, thereby gaining valuable time in the defense and evacuation of Taejon. This act of conspicuous gallantry on the part of Lieutenant Kristanoff reflects the highest possible credit on himself and the military service. Entered the service from Sovey, Minnesota.

First Lieutenant William F. Coghill, 050753, Cavalry, United States Army, a member of the 24th Reconnaissance Company, 24th Infantry Division, is awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action on 12 August 1950 at Yongsan, Korea. By infiltration the enemy had reached the Division main supply route and succeeded in establishing a road block composed of anti-tank and automatic weapons which denied passage of supplies to front line units. Eight vehicles had been destroyed by the enemy in attempting to run this road block. Lieutenant Coghill, in an effort to locate exact enemy positions and to secure a resupply of ammunition for the Reconnaissance Company, volunteered to run the road block in a jeep. In this attempt he was seriously wounded through his leg but managed to get through the road block to his company command post. Although suffering intense pain he refused treatment until he had informed his company commander of the enemy intelligence. This information enabled the company to successfully eliminate the road block and to open the Division main supply route. His bravery, devotion to duty and selfless action reflect the highest credit on Lieutenant Coghill and the armed forces. Entered military service from Nenana, Alaska.

Captain, (then First Lieutenant) Lwain L. Scott, 01540938, Field Artillery, United States Army, a member of Battery A, 52d Field Artillery Battalion, 24th Infantry Division, is awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action on 5 July 1950 at Osan, Korea. An enemy force of superior numbers had passed the forward infantry positions and were attacking the artillery position with observed tank, mortar and small arms fire. Captain Scott refusing to withdraw his unit, ordered the howitzer sections to employ direct fire against the tanks. He then joined a howitzer group to contribute to its firing. The initial enemy fire destroyed the battery fire direction center and the ammunition dump. Captain Scott, realizing his men were firing from exposed positions, furnished the

First Lieutenant Neil F. Woolever, 01177252, Field Artillery, United States Army, a member of Headquarters Battery, 63d Field Artillery Battalion, 24th Infantry Division, is awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action on 8 and 9 July 1950 at Chonan, Korea. Lieutenant Woolever volunteered to leave the infantry battalion command post where he was doing duty as liaison officer to go forward as an observer to adjust artillery fire upon the enemy. On 8 July he repeatedly exposed himself to small arms fire in order to accurately adjust artillery fire which contributed greatly to an orderly withdrawal of the infantry battalion from Chonan. He then volunteered to accompany the Regimental Commander to a forward position where the entire party of which he was a member was isolated by enemy tanks and infantry. In this position he assisted in destroying a motorcycle patrol that attempted to force his position. In spite of being pinned down for several hours by intense small arms fire, he and the forward observer party under his control remained in position. Displaying great skill he called for friendly artillery around his position as a protective screen to afford the withdrawal of his party and the supporting infantry troops. By his coolness and daring under fire he was instrumental in destroying approximately four platoons of the enemy and the orderly evacuation of an infantry battalion. His action reflects great credit on himself and the armed forces. Entered the service from Alpena, Michigan.

Second Lieutenant Francis A. Curtin, 02210265, Medical Service Corps, United States Army, a member of the Medical Company, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, is awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action on 5 August 1950 at Kogong, Korea. Lieutenant Curtin realized that Company C, 34th Infantry Regiment, had been encircled by the enemy. Knowing that it would take the Medical Section of the First Battalion some time to arrive, he volunteered to return to Company C positions. While still under heavy fire and without regard for personal safety he administered to the needs of the wounded. He then proceeded to evacuate them and probably saved the lives of several men. Lieutenant Curtin's selfless actions and devotion to duty reflect high credit on himself and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the Medical Department. Entered the military service from Bollingham, Washington.

✓ Corporal Harvey B. Williamson, RA18341152, Infantry, United States Army, a member of the 24th Reconnaissance Company, 24th Infantry Division, is awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action at Yongsan, Korea on 11 August 1950. On this date while at Yongsan, Korea, the 24th Reconnaissance Company was subjected to heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire and one of the rounds landed near the ammunition truck setting it on fire and wounding three men. With complete disregard for his own safety and under continuous enemy fire, Corporal Williamson dragged the three men to safety and then went back and extinguished the fire in the ammunition truck. This act of conspicuous gallantry on the part of Corporal Williamson reflects the highest possible credit on himself and the military service. Entered the service from Earlsboro, Oklahoma.

II. REVOCATION OF GENERAL ORDERS.---So much of Section I, General Orders Number 70, this headquarters, dated 6 August 1950, pertaining to award of the Purple Heart to Private Arturo J. Alvarado, RA38104976, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, is revoked.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL CHURCH:

OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM J. MORONEY  
Colonel GSC  
Chief of Staff



## Awarded Bronze Star

**New Soldier Sergeant in Korea Who Saved Officer's Life Belittles Exploit in Note to Mother**

Mrs. James P. Keelen of 135 Barclay street yesterday received a copy of a Bronze Star Medal commendation awarded her son, Sgt. James Keelen, in Korea. With it was a note from the 20-year-old soldier.

"Pay no attention to it," he wrote. "Anybody would have done the same thing. And the officer—one of my best buddies—is a brave man. Please give him a call at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington. I'd like to hear how he is getting along."

Keelen identified the officer as Lt. William F. Coghill, but did not give his home address.

The commendation, issued by headquarters of the 24th Infantry Division, was for Keelen's "heroic achievement" near Yongsoan, Korea, on August 13.

### Company Cut Off

It read, in part:

"When his company was cut off by a well concealed enemy road block, Sergeant (then corporal) Keelen volunteered to accompany his executive officer by jeep to locate the enemy position. The intense small arms and anti-tank fire encountered severely wounded the officer.

"Administering first aid, Sgt. Keelen continued on through the road block to reach the recon-

naissance company area. From the information furnished, the road block was attacked and successfully eliminated."

Keelen entered service three years ago after attending St. Columbia's Parochial School. He has been in Korea since July. He has two brothers, Joseph, 15, and Ronald, 8.

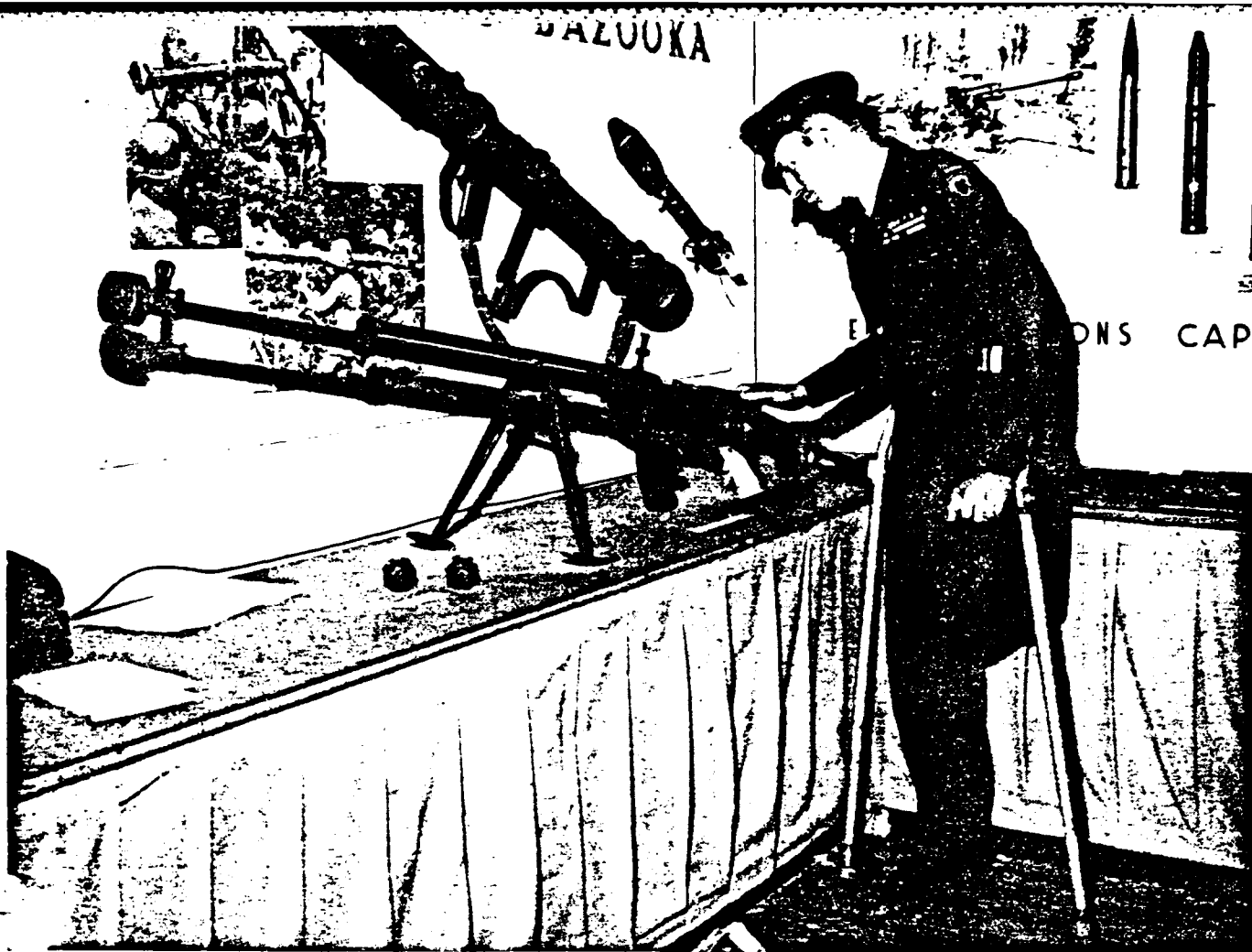
Mrs. Keelen said she plans to visit Lieutenant Coghill at the Washington hospital.



SGT. JAMES KEELLEN

NEW 1961 VAGH: QUICK DELIVERY. Liberal Advances. Terms: Moore Motor Car Co., East Orange, OR 3-8464.—Advertisement.

*Sgt. Keelen accompanied me and was driving the jeep.*



Lieut. William F. Coghill, a Korean amputee now a patient at Walter Reed Hospital, inspects the captured Russian-made Korean equipment which the U. S. Army displayed at the Home Show to promote the sale of U. S. Defense Bonds. Lieut. Coghill, native of Fairbanks, Alaska, was wounded Aug. 11th, last, while fighting with the 24th Reconnaissance Co., 24th Infantry Division.

## Captured Korean Weapons Displayed at Home Show

THE U. S. ARMY exhibit of captured Korean equipment at the Home Show was an excellent promotion for U. S. Defense Bonds. Edward C. Baltz, Chairman, D. C. Savings Bonds Division, told officials of the Home Builders Association of Greater Washington in thanking them for the cooperation that made the display possible.

The exhibit, arranged under the direction of <sup>1st Lt.</sup> Col. Michael R. Belinky, chief of the Army exhibits section, included Russian-made rifles and hand grenades, scheduled showings of the Army's documentary film "Crime of

Korea" and a display of historic U. S. Bonds, one dating back to the Revolutionary War. Also on exhibit was a captured North Korean war bond.

Visitors to the booth made a number of tape recordings promoting Defense Bonds. These were broadcast later by Station WGAY. Visitors to the booth included Mrs. Georgia Neese Clark, treasurer of the U. S., Mrs. Lindsey P. Rawley, women's bond chairman for the District, and singer Connie Boswell.

Army personnel explained the captured equipment to visitors. Among

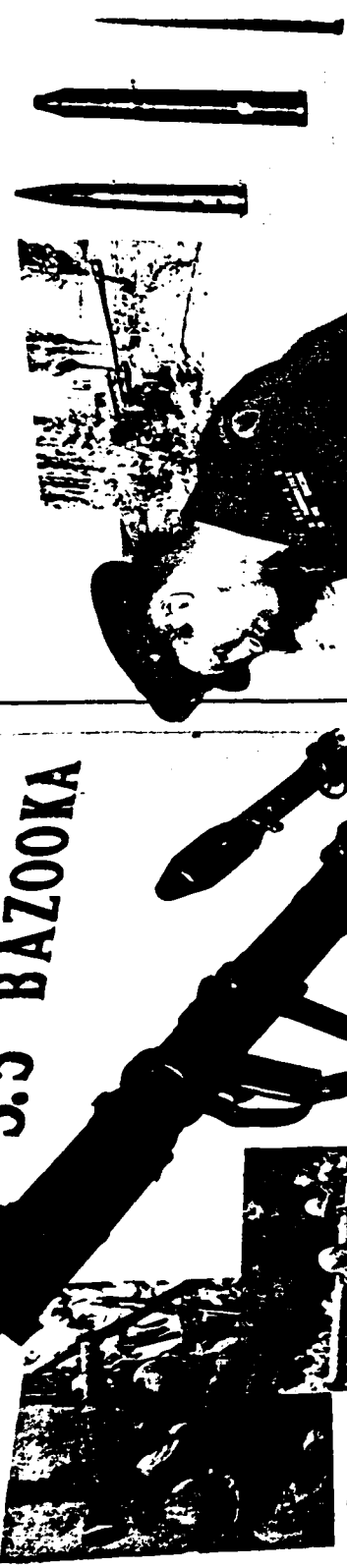
these was a Korean amputee, Lieut. William F. Coghill, a patient at Walter Reed Hospital. Lieut. Coghill lost a leg while fighting Aug. 11th with the 24th Reconnaissance Co., 24th Infantry Division. A West Point graduate, he has been buying E Bonds since they went on sale in 1941.

*I place economy among the first and most important virtues, and public debt as the greatest of dangers. We must make our choice between economy and liberty, or proscription and servitude.*

— THOMAS JEFFERSON

ARMY'S NEW  
3.5" BAZOOKA

U.S. ARMY



ELSONS CAP



ANKERS

Throughout 11 August 1950, Major General Church made several decisions to bolster the US positions in the division rear area and along the main supply route (MSR). Intelligence reports indicated a sizeable enemy force had penetrated the front lines of the division, crossed the Naktang River and were headed to the east to interdict the division lines of communication and the logistical tail.

To eliminate enemy roadblocks along the MSR, the division commander directed the organization of a task force comprised of divisional support troops under the command of Captain George B. Hafeman. The mission of TF HAFEMAN as described in the 24th Infantry Division Order, dated 112400 Aug 1950, was to establish roadblocks along the MSR to eliminate the threat of the enemy moving down the high speed approach and into the division rear area, the command post, and the division supply base at Miryang. Captain Hafeman selected volunteers to man the roadblocks and outposts. His volunteers came from the division support units, to include the 24th MP Company, the 24th Signal Company, the 24th Division Band, and the 724th Ordnance Munitions Company. (In addition, some South Korean Police, normally assigned to control displaced civilians, aided in the security mission.) This hastily organized task force quickly adopted the fighting spirit and at 0500 hours on 11 August, set out to reconnoiter the MSR from the division command post to Yongsan.

midnight  
on 10th  
morning

Shortly after the departure of TF HAFEMAN from the division CP, the 24th Recon Company, located in the vicinity of Yongsan reported that two of their roadblocks, established earlier that day, spotted a North Korean force. The 24th Recon Company made contact with the enemy in the vicinity of Tocha-Ni at 0740 hours and repulsed approximately 50-100 enemy soldiers. Later, at 0830 hours, the 24th Recon Company attacked Non-Ni and forced approximately 50-75 NK soldiers into the hills.

OK  
11th

Meanwhile, TF HAFEMAN moved quickly from his CP position, westward along the MSR, to Yongsan without incident. Arriving around 0900 hours and aware of the enemy activity in the 24th Recon Company sector, TF HAFEMAN moved back down the MSR (moving east) to the Simgoni area. At 0930 hours, Captain Hafeman led his force out of Simgoni, down the roads and trails toward Non-Ni to secure a physical linkup with the 24th Recon Company. The task force advanced a distance of about \_\_\_\_\_ miles to within 500 yards of the Non-Ni when it encountered heavy enemy concentrations. TF HAFEMAN quickly established hasty defensive positions. Captain Hafeman realized his force of volunteers was no match for the North Korean strength. He organized a quick reconnaissance party of four men and led them from their hasty defensive positions, through sporadic sniper fires, to the 24th Recon Company location. After explaining the situation to Captain Kearns, Commander of the 24th Recon Company, Captain Hafeman again maneuvered his recon team back to the task force position. TF HAFEMAN broke contact with the enemy and moved back up the trail to the vicinity of Simgoni where he established a roadblock and a defensive position. A second defensive position and roadblock were established 500 yards east of Simgoni. After reorganizing his force, Captain Hafeman notified the division CP (1600 hours) that 200+ North Korean soldiers were between grid coordinates 1153.1 - 1383.7 and 1151.8 - 1383.4 and another group of approximately 200 North Koreans was moving north toward the MSR.

While the division troops under Captain Hafeman reconnoitered the area along the MSR and the trails southwest from Simgoni toward Non-Ni, other combat

support units received instructions for a new mission. At 111100 August, the 21st Infantry Regiment alerted the 14th Engineer Combat Battalion (ECB) for possible employment as Infantry. Immediately, the battalion commander, Major Miller, organized his unit for combat. At this point, they were not aware of the major role they would play in the defense of the MSR.

At 2000 hours Major Miller received the order to move all available personnel to the 34th Infantry Regimental Command Post. While the officers and men of the 14th ECB moved to the 34th Infantry CP, Major Miller called MG Church and received his order to keep the MSR clear by placing four (4) roadblocks along a three mile stretch of the road between Yongsan and Miryang. Major Miller instructed his adjutant, Captain Gass, to organize the battalion elements into small units and move to locations along the road. His orders to the units were simple; divide the Headquarters and Service Company soldiers, to include staff sections and cooks (a total of roughly 80 soldiers), and provide the following roadblocks: LT Henderson of Headquarters Company and seventeen (17) enlisted men would establish roadblock #1; LT Moore of Headquarters Company would take fifteen (15) enlisted men and establish roadblock #2; LT McMillan of Company A and twenty-four (24) men would establish roadblock #3; and LT Martin of Company A would move with twenty-five (25) enlisted men to establish roadblock #4. A jeep patrol of four enlisted men, under the control of Corporal Hurst was ordered to check the roadblock positions once each hour. Captain Gass started placing the roadblocks into position at 2130 hours. The last roadblock was in position at 2330 hours. The remaining battalion officers of the 14th ECB remained in the 34th Infantry CP to care for communications and provide liaison functions.

The jeep patrol experienced the first activity of the night. For the first hour of 12 August, the patrol reported no activity. Roadblocks were in place with limited radio capabilities between positions. At 0130 hours Corporal Hurst and the jeep patrol departed the 14th ECB Command Post in the vicinity of Yongsan to make another hourly check of the roadblocks. He passed through each of the roadblocks moving east along the road from Yongsan to Miryang. He arrived at roadblock #4 (LT Martin's position), without incident at 0230 hours. After a brief discussion with LT Martin, the jeep patrol began its return trip back to Yongsan by moving west along the Yongsan-Miryang road. The patrol moved through roadblock #3 without incident and continued on toward roadblock #2. While enroute to roadblock #2, the jeep patrol came under enemy automatic weapons fire. The jeep driver, Corporal Dallas, was wounded instantly. The members of the patrol moved CPL Dallas to a safe position under the jeep and quickly found cover nearby. Private First Class Guri then started his move to LT Moore's position at roadblock #2. He arrived at roadblock #2 at 0330 hours and described the enemy contact in detail.

Unfortunately, CPL Hurst and the members of the jeep patrol were unaware of the action occurring ahead of them at roadblock #2. At approximately 0225 hours two medics came into LT Moore's position and reported that their ambulances were hit by automatic weapons fire between roadblocks #2 and #3 vicinity 1152.7 - 1387.4. (The ambulances were moving from east to west ahead of and out of visual contact with the jeep patrol; apparently, the same enemy force which attacked the jeep patrol also ambushed the ambulances along the highway.) Around 0300 hours one ambulance, loaded with the wounded of both ambulances arrived at LT Moore's position. The driver of the ambulance provided details about the enemy ambush during which the driver of the second ambulance was killed. The second ambulance was damaged beyond immediate repair, so all the patients and

aid men were loaded onto the remaining ambulance which continued down the road toward Yongsan. Without radio communications, LT Moore had to rely on a messenger to report the activity in his area. He sent Corporal Saunders in a 2 1/2 ton truck to inform Major Martin of the incident. Passing through roadblock #1, CPL Saunders briefed LT Henderson on the situation with the ambulances, then continued on to find Major Miller and report the incident.

For the 14th ECB the ambush of the ambulances was only the beginning of a long day of fighting for control of the Yongsan-Miryang Road. At about 0520, the enemy began an assault on roadblock #4. Two machine guns and several rifles opened fire. After taking considerable fire from the enemy, LT Martin decided he did not have sufficient firepower to repel the attacking North Koreans.

LT Martin decided to split his force. For the safety of his men, he directed them to move approximately 1/2 mile to the east to link up with the Infantry platoon (TF HAFEMAN). Since all communications were out between roadblocks, LT Martin elected to go forward via jeep to inform roadblock #3 of the enemy activity he faced. After his men departed, LT Martin took SGT Chapman and Corporal Aspden in a jeep and headed toward LT McMillan's position at roadblock #3 to warn him of the threat along the MSR in the vicinity of roadblock #4 which was now unoccupied. LT Martin's men, led by SGT Churchill maneuvered eastward along the MSR toward TF HAFEMAN from 0520 hours until 1600 hours under sporadic enemy fires. Without the advantage of communications between the two units, neither could warn the other of the 150 man enemy force that separated them.

As he left his position at roadblock #4, LT Martin was unaware of the activity developing at roadblock #3. Throughout the night, roadblock #3 received sporadic enemy fires. At 0600 hours, immediately prior to LT Martin's arrival, the enemy opened up on the position with automatic weapons, rifles and hand grenades, killing LT McMillan and three enlisted men. As he approached, the enemy ambushed LT Martin's jeep taking him and SGT Chapman prisoner. (CPL Aspden was apparently killed when the jeep crashed as a result of the enemy ambush.) Taking command of the surviving members of roadblock #3, SGT Kavetsky led eight men out of roadblock #3 under enemy fires, and set a course for roadblock #2. The move proved fatal to all but SGT Kavetsky. Each member of the patrol, except SGT Kavetsky, was picked off by sniper fire while enroute to roadblock #2. The sergeant took cover in a rice paddy where he hid until he was picked up by a personnel carrier at 1645 hours the same day.

The developing action along the MSR increased the demand for communications among the roadblocks and back to the CP. LT Powers and LT Buffington, both of Headquarters and Service Company, exercised their good judgement and moved to roadblock #1 to begin the task of repairing the communications and to locate the jeep patrol. At 0300 hours, the activity around roadblock #1 was relatively light. LT Henderson advised them not to go forward until daybreak because of flares he saw earlier in the vicinity of roadblock #3. At 0600 hours the two lieutenants moved forward to roadblock #2 where they were briefed on the fate of the jeep patrol and the capture of the LT Martin and SGT Chapman. After reporting the incident to Major Miller via the radio, LT Buffington tried to fix the head space of the thirty caliber machine gun at roadblock #2. An enemy machine gun opened up on the position, hitting LT Buffington three times. He was immediately evacuated by jeep without correcting the communications problems.

The enemy unit of 150 North Koreans which forced LT Martin to evacuate his

position at roadblock #4 early in the morning, continued to attack down the MSR to the east toward Miryang and into the defensive positions of TF HAFEMAN. By 0630 hours, Captain Hafeman was cut off on both sides - unable to move toward Yongsan in the West or Miryang in the East. Communications between the two TF positions went out. At 0830 hours Captain Hafeman ordered a motorized patrol of three vehicles to break through the enemy roadblock and on to the TF position #2. Each of the vehicles was armed with a .50 cal machine gun, a Browning Automatic Rifle and small arms. At 0900 hours the patrol departed eastward along the MSR and into the enemy roadblock. Under intense enemy machine gun fire, the patrol successfully ran the enemy roadblock and made it to position #2 at 0935 hours, reporting three casualties plus damage to one jeep and a .50 cal. Enemy casualties were reported at three snipers killed and a machine gun position knocked out. The road between the two positions appeared to be free of enemy forces. At 1000 hours a resupply of small arms ammunition, hand grenades and mortar ammunition managed to make it up the MSR to TF HAFEMAN, position #2. Captain Hafeman ordered the return of the motorized patrol with all the ammunition. The patrol loaded the ammunition and departed position #2 to the west along the

MSR toward position #1. The patrol was surprised by the enemy which had reconstituted its force covering the MSR. Although the road was clear, enemy small arms fire harassed the patrol along the entire stretch of the the MSR between the two roadblock positions. The patrol suffered no additional casualties.

The 24th Recon Company was experiencing a greater threat at the western end of the MSR near Yongsan. The enemy had interdicted the 21st Infantry in positions around Yongsan throughout the night and early morning of 12 August. An observed force of 200 North Koreans maneuvered to the high ground around Yongsan, pushing the Infantry out of their positions, and establishing a roadblock (at 1153.3 - 1387.3) on the MSR between the 24th Recon Company sector and the stretch of road patrolled by the 14th ECB. At 0900 hours LT Coghill, the Executive Officer for 24th Recon, and SGT Keelen, the Communications Chief, ran the enemy roadblock in a 1/4 ton truck in an effort to link up with the company command post in Yongsan. LT Coghill was *severely wounded* during the operation, but ordered the driver to continue on to the company roadblock just outside the city. Shortly after LT Coghill arrived and explained the disposition at the enemy roadblock, Captain Cody of Company F, 9th Infantry reported to the 24th Recon Company position with a mission to attack the enemy on the high ground to the rear of the company position and the left of the MSR. The 24th Recon Company received the mission to clear the MSR using attachments from F Company and organic systems of the reconnaissance unit. 24th Recon would begin their mission as soon as possible while Captain Cody and the remainder of Company F would wait for the cover of darkness.

*believed  
earlier than  
0600 to 0700*

Master Sergeant Montee was designated the commander for the road clearing operation. His mission was to attack and destroy the enemy roadblock. If the roadblock could not be destroyed, he was to return to the company and report the disposition of the enemy. If he could clear the roadblock, he was to continue along the MSR to link up with TF HAFEMAN. M/Sergeant Montee organized his attack force with two rifle squads (from Company F, 9th Infantry), two M24 tanks and two M39 personnel carriers. The prepared to move out while the 14th ECB prepared for a new mission.

At noon Major Miller, Commander of the 14th Engineer (Combat) Battalion,

arrived at the 34th Infantry Regimental command post where he received a new mission. His units along the MSR had suffered significant losses throughout the early hours of 12 August. At this point on the 12th, they manned only two of the four roadblocks initially established. The 14th ECB was released of their responsibility to secure the MSR and ordered to move to new locations outside of Yongsan. LT Henderson and the members of roadblock #1 assumed positions north-east of Yongsan from which they would deny the enemy and civilians access to a draw leading to the south down the hill to the MSR. LT Moore and the men at roadblock #2 were relieved by LTC Smith at 1530 hours and joined LT Henderson at 1630 hours in positions atop the hill overlooking Yongsan and the MSR.

M/SGT Montee departed on his mission to attack the enemy roadblock immediately after the engineers vacated their roadblock positions on the MSR. Montee's combat team eliminated the enemy roadblock and continued, as ordered, to link up with TF HAFEMAN at its western most position (1156.0-1387.2). One non-commissioned officer, a rifle squad leader, was killed in the action. The team received special congratulations from the Assistant Division Commander, BG Menoher, who then ordered the combat team to remain with TF HAFEMAN to help defeat an even greater enemy threat emerging in front of the task force.

Due to the mounting enemy threat, at 1330 hours the G-3 approved Captain Hafeman's request to withdraw his position #1. After relocating his 81-mm mortar and 200 rounds of ammunition to a supporting position east of the pass in

range to support the forward position. At 1530 hours Captain Hafeman gave the order for all elements of position #1 to withdraw to the new position near the pass. His instructions were very direct; all soldiers were to infiltrate back to the new position fifteen minutes prior to the movement of any vehicle in order for the soldiers to cover the move of the vehicles. The move included all members of TF HAFEMAN, the members of M/SGT Montee's combat team, two members of the 14th ECB (SGT Kavetsky and another), as well as, the two tanks and one remaining personnel carrier of the 24th Recon Company. By 1600 hours, all elements of position #1 closed in the new position and took up fighting positions left and right of the pass. Activities throughout the afternoon were conducted under enemy fire. The task force lost one KIA, two seriously wounded and eight men slightly wounded, to include three South Korean police who were members of the task force. Enemy casualties were estimated between forty and sixty KIA.

The enemy continued to pressure TF HAFEMAN. At 1800 hours Captain Hafeman reorganized his forces, now approximately 135 strong due to the addition of the combat team from the 24th Recon Company. He positioned five outposts on the high ground to the right and left of the pass along the MSR. All remaining troops were moved to a second position near a pass in the vicinity of Hagongni. At this point, Captain Hafeman released the MPs to their parent unit. He then departed the outpost position to return to G-3 to brief elements of the 23rd Infantry who were preparing to attack through TF HAFEMAN to defeat the remaining enemy along the MSR between Miryang and Yongsan.

At some point, sometime between 1600 and 2030 hours, enemy forces moved back onto the MSR and established another roadblock. The 24th Recon Company organized a second combat team to eliminate the threat. LT Sneed was assigned two M24 tanks, one M39 personnel carrier and six riflemen with a mission to neutralize the roadblock and return to the company position. The team moved out at

LT.  
Eacil H  
Sneed



2030 hours and engaged the enemy. The combat team was unsuccessful in breaking the enemy roadblock; however, LT Speed pursued the fleeing enemy, continued eastward and joined TF HAFEMAN at the new position (vic 1156.0-1387.2). Due to darkness and the inability to use the tank weapons at night, LT Speed remained with TF HAFEMAN.

Enemy activity was light for the remainder of the night. While TF HAFEMAN, the 14th Engineer Combat Battalion and the 24th Recon Company rested, the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry prepared to assume the fight to control the MSR. The following morning at 0500 hours, the Infantry battalion moved through TF HAFEMAN's positions and down the MSR to the West. This operation ended the rear area defense role for TF HAFEMAN. At 0900 hours, 13 August 1950, TF HAFEMAN was dissolved. After a valient effort in combat roles, the combat service support soldiers of TF HAFEMAN returned to their duties in the division command post. while the members of the 14th Engineer Combat Battalion, 24th Reconnaissance Company, and Company F, 9th Infantry continued in their defense of the Yongsan area.

April 23, 1984

Dear Maj Linke:

I wish I could be of more assistance. Frankly institutional memory is better than mine. I put a new pencil notation on page 3 that probably won't help much. However I can perhaps set the stage a little bit.

The 14th ECB had been doing construction work in Japan prior to the outbreak of the Korean war. I think the Bn had ~~4~~ understrength, undertrained cos when they were sent to Korea (1 Hq Co & ~~3~~ line Cos). No one in the Cos knew how to fight as Inf. As I recall most of my unit were cooks. They weren't bad cooks but they (& I) were pretty poor infantrymen. I had just arrived (perhaps a few weeks) in the Bn & was assigned as an Asst S-3 or something.

When we were organized into units or road blocks we met each other for the first time. We were put out in position with the mission of stopping the enemy. It was pitch dark and couldn't have been more confusing, as I remember our radio communications were 1 or 2 walkie talkies & we were, of course, out of range with everyone. When we were first dropped off (no sh lights) we sort of circled the road intersection, signs to me we were on a pretty good gravel road with a foot trail crossing it. It was a rice paddy area but

I don't think the fields were flooded at that time. I spent the few hours of darkness in the road drainage ditch. We had no equipment except entrenching tools & our rifles so we couldn't have built a road block if we were so inclined — no barbed wire, demolitions, etc.

Morale was OK. We had been given a job & we tried to do it. We suspected that we were just sitting ducks & that by drawing fire we would be able to establish that there was enemy there or in our vicinity.

In 1965 I took the 588th Engr C Bn from Ft Lee to Vietnam. We were in better shape to fight as Inf, believe me! When our unit was alerted, perhaps Sept, we were filled up with people, experienced NCOs, but new 2d Lt's. I was able to get a 1 month delay in departure times so I could have some time to train as Inf. Took the unit to AP Hill and we spent 30 days playing Inf. We weren't very good Inf but we were a hell of a lot better than the 14th.

Good luck on your project. Sorry I couldn't be more helpful. Do they still make you study all the time to pass the exams at Ft. Leavenworth?

S. I got your letter today.  
23 Apr. & will mail it today, so  
at least I haven't held you up.

Sincerely,  
Tom T. Moore

MAJ Carl E. Linke  
176 5th Artillery Road  
Ft Leavenworth, KS 66027

15 April 1984

COL William T. Moore (USA Ret)  
4948 Horseshoe Bend  
Colorado Springs, CO 80917

Dear Colonel Moore,

Thank you for agreeing to help me in my research of the Korean War. In our telephone conversation of 26 February, I briefly outlined my project. Allow me to explain my work in more detail.

As a student in the Command and General Staff College, I am working on a research project studying rear area defensive operations. Based on a literature search performed by the staff of the Combat Studies Institute here at Fort Leavenworth, there is a void in our military history for a rear area operation conducted in Korea in the 24th Infantry Division, 10-13 August 1950. I am charged with filling the void.

Enclosed is an early draft of my work. These sheets represent only a part of the entire work which will analyze the actions and the doctrine of that period. The accounts of the action are taken from actual war diaries of the 24th Infantry Division, the 14th Engineer Combat Battalion, the 24th Reconnaissance Company and several other units which were involved in the action. Would you please read what I have spliced together, correct any errors, highlight significant portions and expand on details that you recall about the action, i.e. orders given, names of personnel, individual actions by soldiers, enemy activities, tactical doctrine used, your specific role in the roadblocks, communications used, the confusion of the mission, the effects of weather, terrain, and morale, etc.

My deadline for submitting this project for printing is 7 May 1984. I realize that I have not allowed a lot of time; I have experienced some setbacks in acquiring the diaries. Please make your comments directly on the DRAFT, either as marginal notes or footnotes. If you know anyone else who was involved with this operation and know how I might reach him, please let me know in the return packet or call me collect at home (913-651-4238; after 1900 hours CST, please.)

Again, thank you for your assistance. Your contribution to this research will live forever in our study of military history.

Sincerely,

Carl E. Linke  
MAJ, Infantry

Throughout 11 August 1950, Major General Church made several decisions to bolster the US positions in the division rear area and along the main supply route (MSR). Intelligence reports indicated a sizeable enemy force had penetrated the front lines of the division, crossed the Naktang River and were headed to the east to interdict the division lines of communication and the logistical tail.

To eliminate enemy roadblocks along the MSR, the division commander directed the organization of a task force comprised of divisional support troops under the command of Captain George B. Hafeman. The mission of TF HAFEMAN as described in the 24th Infantry Division Order, dated 112400 Aug 1950, was to establish roadblocks along the MSR to eliminate the threat of the enemy moving down the high speed approach and into the division rear area, the command post, and the division supply base at Miryang. Captain Hafeman selected volunteers to man the roadblocks and outposts. His volunteers came from the division support units, to include the 24th MP Company, the 24th Signal Company, the 24th Division Band, and the 724th Ordnance Munitions Company. (In addition, some South Korean Police, normally assigned to control displaced civilians, aided in the security mission.) This hastily organized task force quickly adopted the fighting spirit and at 0500 hours on 11 August, set out to reconnoiter the MSR from the division command post to Yongsan.

Shortly after the departure of TF HAFEMAN from the division CP, the 24th Recon Company, located in the vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ reported that two of their roadblocks, established earlier that day, spotted a North Korean force. The 24th Recon Company made contact with the enemy in the vicinity of Tocha-Ni at 0740 hours and repulsed approximately 50-100 enemy soldiers. Later, at 0830 hours, the 24th Recon Company attacked Non-Ni and forced approximately 50-75 NK soldiers into the hills.

Meanwhile, TF HAFEMAN moved quickly from his CP position, westward along the MSR, to Yongsan without incident. Arriving around 0900 hours and aware of the enemy activity in the 24th Recon Company sector, TF HAFEMAN moved back down the MSR (moving east) to the Simgoni area. At 0930 hours, Captain Hafeman led his force out of Simgoni, down the roads and trails toward Non-Ni to secure a physical linkup with the 24th Recon Company. The task force advanced a distance of about \_\_\_\_\_ miles to within 500 yards of the Non-Ni when it encountered heavy enemy concentrations. TF HAFEMAN quickly established hasty defensive positions. Captain Hafeman realized his force of volunteers was no match for the North Korean strength. He organized a quick reconnaissance party of four men and led them from their hasty defensive positions, through sporadic sniper fires, to the 24th Recon Company location. After explaining the situation to Captain Kearns, Commander of the 24th Recon Company, Captain Hafeman again maneuvered his recon team back to the task force position. TF HAFEMAN broke contact with the enemy and moved back up the trail to the vicinity of Simgoni where he established a roadblock and a defensive position. A second defensive position and roadblock were established 500 yards east of Simgoni. After reorganizing his force, Captain Hafeman notified the division CP (1600 hours) that 200+ North Korean soldiers were between grid coordinates 1153.1 - 1383.7 and 1151.8 - 1383.4 and another group of approximately 200 North Koreans was moving north toward the MSR.

While the division troops under Captain Hafeman reconnoitered the area along the MSR and the trails southwest from Simgoni toward Non-Ni, other combat

support units received instructions for a new mission. At 111100 August, the 21st Infantry Regiment alerted the 14th Engineer Combat Battalion (ECB) for possible employment as Infantry. Immediately, the battalion commander, Major Miller, organized his unit for combat. At this point, they were not aware of the major role they would play in the defense of the MSR.

At 2000 hours Major Miller received the order to move all available personnel to the 34th Infantry Regimental Command Post. While the officers and men of the 14th ECB moved to the 34th Infantry CP, Major Miller called MG Church and received his order to keep the MSR clear by placing four (4) roadblocks along a three mile stretch of the road between Yongsan and Miryang. Major Miller instructed his adjutant, Captain Gass, to organize the battalion elements into small units and move to locations along the road. His orders to the units were simple; divide the Headquarters and Service Company soldiers, to include staff sections and cooks (a total of roughly 80 soldiers), and provide the following roadblocks: LT Henderson of Headquarters Company and seventeen (17) enlisted men would establish roadblock #1; LT Moore of Headquarters Company would take fifteen (15) enlisted men and establish roadblock #2; LT McMillan of Company A and twenty-four (24) men would establish roadblock #3; and LT Martin of Company A would move with twenty-five (25) enlisted men to establish roadblock #4. A jeep patrol of four enlisted men, under the control of Corporal Hurst was ordered to check the roadblock positions once each hour. Captain Gass started placing the roadblocks into position at 2130 hours. The last roadblock was in position at 2330 hours. The remaining battalion officers of the 14th ECB remained in the 34th Infantry CP to care for communications and provide liaison functions.

The jeep patrol experienced the first activity of the night. For the first hour of 12 August, the patrol reported no activity. Roadblocks were in place with limited radio capabilities between positions. At 0130 hours Corporal Hurst and the jeep patrol departed the 14th ECB Command Post in the vicinity of Yongsan to make another hourly check of the roadblocks. He passed through each of the roadblocks moving east along the road from Yongsan to Miryang. He arrived at roadblock #4 (LT Martin's position), without incident at 0230 hours. After a brief discussion with LT Martin, the jeep patrol began its return trip back to Yongsan by moving west along the Yongsan-Miryang road. The patrol moved through roadblock #3 without incident and continued on toward roadblock #2. While enroute to roadblock #2, the jeep patrol came under enemy automatic weapons fire. The jeep driver, Corporal Dallas, was wounded instantly. The members of the patrol moved CPL Dallas to a safe position under the jeep and quickly found cover nearby. Private First Class Guri then started his move to LT Moore's position at roadblock #2. He arrived at roadblock #2 at 0330 hours and described the enemy contact in detail. ③

Unfortunately, CPL Hurst and the members of the jeep patrol were unaware of the action occurring ahead of them at roadblock #2. At approximately 0225 hours two medics came into LT Moore's position and reported that their ambulances were hit by automatic weapons fire between roadblocks #2 and #3 vicinity 1152.7 - 1387.4. (The ambulances were moving from east to west ahead of and out of visual contact with the jeep patrol; apparently, the same enemy force which attacked the jeep patrol also ambushed the ambulances along the highway.) Around 0300 hours one ambulance, loaded with the wounded of both ambulances arrived at LT Moore's position. The driver of the ambulance provided details about the enemy ambush during which the driver of the second ambulance was killed. The second ambulance was damaged beyond immediate repair, so all the patients and

aid men were loaded onto the remaining ambulance which continued down the road toward Yongsan. Without radio communications, LT Moore had to rely on a messenger to report the activity in his area. He sent Corporal Saunders in a 2 1/2 ton truck to inform Major Martin of the incident. Passing through roadblock #1 CPL Saunders briefed LT Henderson on the situation with the ambulances, then continued on to find Major Miller and report the incident.

For the 14th ECB the ambush of the ambulances was only the beginning of a long day of fighting for control of the Yongsan-Miryang Road. At about 0520, the enemy began an assault on roadblock #4. Two machine guns and several rifles opened fire. After taking considerable fire from the enemy, LT Martin decided he did not have sufficient firepower to repel the attacking North Koreans.

LT Martin decided to split his force. For the safety of his men, he directed them to move approximately 1/2 mile to the east to link up with the Infantry platoon (TF HAFEMAN). Since all communications were out between roadblocks, LT Martin elected to go forward via jeep to inform roadblock #3 of the enemy activity he faced. After his men departed, LT Martin took SGT Chapman and Corporal Aspden in a jeep and headed toward LT McMillan's position at roadblock #3 to warn him of the threat along the MSR in the vicinity of roadblock #4 which was now unoccupied. LT Martin's men, led by SGT Churchill maneuvered eastward along the MSR toward TF HAFEMAN from 0520 hours until 1600 hours under sporadic enemy fires. Without the advantage of communications between the two units, neither could warn the other of the 150 man enemy force that separated them.

As he left his position at roadblock #4, LT Martin was unaware of the activity developing at roadblock #3. Throughout the night, roadblock #3 received sporadic enemy fires. At 0600 hours, immediately prior to LT Martin's arrival, the enemy opened up on the position with automatic weapons, rifles and hand grenades, killing LT McMillan and three enlisted men. As he approached, the enemy ambushed LT Martin's jeep taking him and SGT Chapman prisoner. (CPL Aspden was apparently killed when the jeep crashed as a result of the enemy ambush.) Taking command of the surviving members of roadblock #3, SGT Kavetsky led eight men out of roadblock #3 under enemy fires, and set a course for roadblock #2. The move proved fatal to all but SGT Kavetsky. Each member of the patrol, except SGT Kavetsky, was picked off by sniper fire while enroute to roadblock #2. The sergeant took cover in a rice paddy where he hid until he was picked up by a personnel carrier at 1645 hours the same day.

The developing action along the MSR increased the demand for communications among the roadblocks and back to the CP. LT Powers and LT Buffington, both of Headquarters and Service Company, exercised their good judgement and moved to roadblock #1 to begin the task of repairing the communications and to locate the jeep patrol. At 0300 hours, the activity around roadblock #1 was relatively light. LT Henderson advised them not to go forward until daybreak because of flares he saw earlier in the vicinity of roadblock #3. At 0600 hours the two lieutenants moved forward to roadblock #2 where they were briefed on the fate of the jeep patrol and the capture of ~~the~~ LT Martin and SGT Chapman. After reporting the incident to Major Miller via the radio, LT Buffington tried to fix the head space of the thirty caliber machine gun at roadblock #2. An enemy machine gun opened up on the position, hitting LT Buffington three times. He was immediately evacuated by jeep without correcting the communications problems.

The enemy unit of 150 North Koreans which forced LT Martin to evacuate his

*My jeep had been dropped off about 11:00 pm at gun and roadblock #1. I was expecting to find the jeep there but it was not there. I was told that it had been taken to roadblock #2. I went to roadblock #2 and found the jeep there. I was told that it had been taken to roadblock #2. I went to roadblock #2 and found the jeep there. I was told that it had been taken to roadblock #2. I went to roadblock #2 and found the jeep there.*

position at roadblock #4 early in the morning, continued to attack down the MSR to the east toward Miryang and into the defensive positions of TF HAFEMAN. By 0630 hours, Captain Hafeman was cut off on both sides - unable to move toward Yongsan in the West or Miryang in the East. Communications between the two TF positions went out. At 0830 hours Captain Hafeman ordered a motorized patrol of three vehicles to break through the enemy roadblock and on to the TF position #2. Each of the vehicles was armed with a .50 cal machine gun, a Browning Automatic Rifle and small arms. At 0900 hours the patrol departed eastward along the MSR and into the enemy roadblock. Under intense enemy machine gun fire, the patrol successfully ran the enemy roadblock and made it to position #2 at 0935 hours, reporting three casualties plus damage to one jeep and a .50 cal. Enemy casualties were reported at three snipers killed and a machine gun position knocked out. The road between the two positions appeared to be free of enemy forces. At 1000 hours a resupply of small arms ammunition, hand grenades and mortar ammunition managed to make it up the MSR to TF HAFEMAN, position #2. Captain Hafeman ordered the return of the motorized patrol with all the ammunition. The patrol loaded the ammunition and departed position #2 to the west along the

MSR toward position #1. The patrol was surprised by the enemy which had reconstituted its force covering the MSR. Although the road was clear, enemy small arms fire harassed the patrol along the entire stretch of the the MSR between the two roadblock positions. The patrol suffered no additional casualties.

The 24th Recon Company was experiencing a greater threat at the western end of the MSR near Yongsan. The enemy had interdicted the 21st Infantry in positions around Yongsan throughout the night and early morning of 12 August. An observed force of 200 North Koreans maneuvered to the high ground around Yongsan, pushing the Infantry out of their positions, and establishing a roadblock (at 1153.3 - 1387.3) on the MSR between the 24th Recon Company sector and the stretch of road patrolled by the 14th ECB. At 0900 hours LT Coghill, the Executive Officer for 24th Recon, and SGT Keelen, the Communications Chief, ran the enemy roadblock in a 1/4 ton truck in an effort to link up with the company command post in Yongsan. LT Coghill was injured during the operation, but ordered the driver to continue on to the company roadblock just outside the city. Shortly after LT Coghill arrived and explained the disposition at the enemy roadblock, Captain Cody of Company F, 9th Infantry reported to the 24th Recon Company position with a mission to attack the enemy on the high ground to the rear of the company position and the left of the MSR. The 24th Recon Company received the mission to clear the MSR using attachments from F Company and organic systems of the reconnaissance unit. 24th Recon would begin their mission as soon as possible while Captain Cody and the remainder of Company F would wait for the cover of darkness.

Master Sergeant Montee was designated the commander for the road clearing operation. His mission was to attack and destroy the enemy roadblock. If the roadblock could not be destroyed, he was to return to the company and report the disposition of the enemy. If he could clear the roadblock, he was to continue along the MSR to link up with TF HAFEMAN. M/Sergeant Montee organized his attack force with two rifle squads (from Company F, 9th Infantry), two M24 tanks and two M39 personnel carriers. He prepared to move out while the 14th ECB prepared for a new mission.

At noon Major Miller, Commander of the 14th Engineer (Combat) Battalion,



arrived at the 34th Infantry Regimental command post where he received a new mission. His units along the MSR had suffered significant losses throughout the early hours of 12 August. At this point on the 12th, they manned only two of the four roadblocks initially established. The 14th ECB was released of their responsibility to secure the MSR and ordered to move to new locations outside of Yongsan. LT Henderson and the members of roadblock #1 assumed positions north-east of Yongsan from which they would deny the enemy and civilians access to a draw leading to the south down the hill to the MSR. LT Moore and the men at roadblock #2 were relieved by LTC Smith at 1530 hours and joined LT Henderson at 1630 hours in positions atop the hill overlooking Yongsan and the MSR.

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COL Terence A. Powers, USA, (RET)  
114 Harlan Drive  
Savannah, Georgia 31406

27 April 1984

Major Carl E. Linke  
176 5th Artillery Road  
Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027

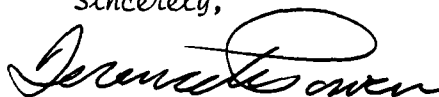
Dear Major Linke,

I don't know how much my input will help. Recollections of the events at the time are certainly dimmed by time.

The situation as depicted by the official diary brought to light a more complete knowledge of the situation which needless to say was very confused and fluid. A personal note of sorrow was that Cpl Dallas who volunteered for the messenger mission was my driver. The version that got back to me at the time was that after the incident his body was draped over the engine compartment with hood up by the North Koreans to give the appearance that he was trying to fix the motor. The enemy had hoped that this would attract help from any passing US troops.

As far as the road block positions were concerned. The night in question was pitch black; we were not familiar with the terrain; we were directed to occupy immediately. I was with one of the groups. I can't remember which that occupied one of the positions. The defense was set up as best that it could be under the circumstances, with one exception, most of the men who were very tired failed to "DIG-IN". After the troops were in things became quiet. I remember that all of a sudden the dogs in the surrounding area began to bark as if being disturbed by someone or something passing by. I had to leave this position for other duties at that time. The next morning we were informed that 3 Officers and 33 EM had been killed at that location. The enemy had evidently surrounded the area during the night and attacked at dawn. Lesson to be learned; No matter how tired the troops are when they occupy a position insist that they "DIG-IN".

Sincerely,



Terence A. Powers  
Col, TC (USA, RET)

MAJ Carl E. Linke  
176 5th Artillery Road  
Ft Leavenworth, KS 66027

15 April 1984

COL Terence A. Powers (USA Ret)  
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To eliminate enemy roadblocks along the MSR, the division commander directed the organization of a task force comprised of divisional support troops under the command of Captain George B. Hafeman. The mission of TF HAFEMAN as described in the 24th Infantry Division Order, dated 112400 Aug 1950, was to establish roadblocks along the MSR to eliminate the threat of the enemy moving down the high speed approach and into the division rear area, the command post, and the division supply base at Miryang. Captain Hafeman selected volunteers to man the roadblocks and outposts. His volunteers came from the division support units, to include the 24th MP Company, the 24th Signal Company, the 24th Division Band, and the 724th Ordnance Munitions Company. (In addition, some South Korean Police, normally assigned to control displaced civilians, aided in the security mission.) This hastily organized task force quickly adopted the fighting spirit and at 0500 hours on 11 August, set out to reconnoiter the MSR from the division command post to Yongsan.

Shortly after the departure of TF HAFEMAN from the division CP, the 24th Recon Company, located in the vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ reported that two of their roadblocks, established earlier that day, spotted a North Korean force. The 24th Recon Company made contact with the enemy in the vicinity of Tocha-Ni at 0740 hours and repulsed approximately 50-100 enemy soldiers. Later, at 0830 hours, the 24th Recon Company attacked Non-Ni and forced approximately 50-75 NK soldiers into the hills.

Meanwhile, TF HAFEMAN moved quickly from his CP position, westward along the MSR, to Yongsan without incident. Arriving around 0900 hours and aware of the enemy activity in the 24th Recon Company sector, TF HAFEMAN moved back down the MSR (moving east) to the Simgoni area. At 0930 hours, Captain Hafeman led his force out of Simgoni, down the roads and trails toward Non-Ni to secure a physical linkup with the 24th Recon Company. The task force advanced a distance of about \_\_\_\_\_ miles to within 500 yards of the Non-Ni when it encountered heavy enemy concentrations. TF HAFEMAN quickly established hasty defensive positions. Captain Hafeman realized his force of volunteers was no match for the North Korean strength. He organized a quick reconnaissance party of four men and led them from their hasty defensive positions, through sporadic sniper fires, to the 24th Recon Company location. After explaining the situation to Captain Kearns, Commander of the 24th Recon Company, Captain Hafeman again maneuvered his recon team back to the task force position. TF HAFEMAN broke contact with the enemy and moved back up the trail to the vicinity of Simgoni where he established a roadblock and a defensive position. A second defensive position and roadblock were established 500 yards east of Simgoni. After reorganizing his force, Captain Hafeman notified the division CP (1600 hours) that 200+ North Korean soldiers were between grid coordinates 1153.1 - 1383.7 and 1151.8 - 1383.4 and another group of approximately 200 North Koreans was moving north toward the MSR.

While the division troops under Captain Hafeman reconnoitered the area along the MSR and the trails southwest from Simgoni toward Non-Ni, other combat

support units received instructions for a new mission. At 111100 August, the 21st Infantry Regiment alerted the 14th Engineer Combat Battalion (ECB) for possible employment as Infantry. Immediately, the battalion commander, Major Miller, organized his unit for combat. At this point, they were not aware of the major role they would play in the defense of the MSR.

At 2000 hours Major Miller received the order to move all available personnel to the 34th Infantry Regimental Command Post. While the officers and men of the 14th ECB moved to the 34th Infantry CP, Major Miller called MG Church and received his order to keep the MSR clear by placing four (4) roadblocks along a three mile stretch of the road between Yongsan and Miryang. Major Miller instructed his adjutant, Captain Gass, to organize the battalion elements into small units and move to locations along the road. His orders to the units were simple; divide the Headquarters and Service Company soldiers, to include staff sections and cooks (a total of roughly 80 soldiers), and provide the following roadblocks: LT Henderson of Headquarters Company and seventeen (17) enlisted men would establish roadblock #1; LT Moore of Headquarters Company would take fifteen (15) enlisted men and establish roadblock #2; LT McMillan of Company A and twenty-four (24) men would establish roadblock #3; and LT Martin of Company A would move with twenty-five (25) enlisted men to establish roadblock #4. A jeep patrol of four enlisted men, under the control of Corporal Hurst was ordered to check the roadblock positions once each hour. Captain Gass started placing the roadblocks into position at 2130 hours. The last roadblock was in position at 2330 hours. The remaining battalion officers of the 14th ECB remained in the 34th Infantry CP to care for communications and provide liaison functions.

The jeep patrol experienced the first activity of the night. For the first hour of 12 August, the patrol reported no activity. Roadblocks were in place with limited radio capabilities between positions. At 0130 hours Corporal Hurst and the jeep patrol departed the 14th ECB Command Post in the vicinity of Yongsan to make another hourly check of the roadblocks. He passed through each of the roadblocks moving east along the road from Yongsan to Miryang. He arrived at roadblock #4 (LT Martin's position), without incident at 0230 hours. After a brief discussion with LT Martin, the jeep patrol began its return trip back to Yongsan by moving west along the Yongsan-Miryang road. The patrol moved through roadblock #3 without incident and continued on toward roadblock #2. While enroute to roadblock #2, the jeep patrol came under enemy automatic weapons fire. The jeep driver, Corporal Dallas, was wounded instantly. The members of the patrol moved CPL Dallas to a safe position under the jeep and quickly found cover nearby. Private First Class Guri then started his move to LT Moore's position at roadblock #2. He arrived at roadblock #2 at 0330 hours and described the enemy contact in detail.

Unfortunately, CPL Hurst and the members of the jeep patrol were unaware of the action occurring ahead of them at roadblock #2. At approximately 0225 hours two medics came into LT Moore's position and reported that their ambulances were hit by automatic weapons fire between roadblocks #2 and #3 vicinity 1152.7 - 1387.4. (The ambulances were moving from east to west ahead of and out of visual contact with the jeep patrol; apparently, the same enemy force which attacked the jeep patrol also ambushed the ambulances along the highway.) Around 0300 hours one ambulance, loaded with the wounded of both ambulances arrived at LT Moore's position. The driver of the ambulance provided details about the enemy ambush during which the driver of the second ambulance was killed. The second ambulance was damaged beyond immediate repair, so all the patients and

aid men were loaded onto the remaining ambulance which continued down the road toward Yongsan. Without radio communications, LT Moore had to rely on a messenger to report the activity in his area. He sent Corporal Saunders in a 2 1/2 ton truck to inform Major Martin of the incident. Passing through roadblock #1, CPL Saunders briefed LT Henderson on the situation with the ambulances, then continued on to find Major Miller and report the incident.

For the 14th ECB the ambush of the ambulances was only the beginning of a long day of fighting for control of the Yongsan-Miryang Road. At about 0520, the enemy began an assault on roadblock #4. Two machine guns and several rifles opened fire. After taking considerable fire from the enemy, LT Martin decided he did not have sufficient firepower to repel the attacking North Koreans.

LT Martin decided to split his force. For the safety of his men, he directed them to move approximately 1/2 mile to the east to link up with the Infantry platoon (TF HAFEMAN). Since all communications were out between roadblocks, LT Martin elected to go forward via jeep to inform roadblock #3 of the enemy activity he faced. After his men departed, LT Martin took SGT Chapman and Corporal Aspden in a jeep and headed toward LT McMillan's position at roadblock #3 to warn him of the threat along the MSR in the vicinity of roadblock #4 which was now unoccupied. LT Martin's men, led by SGT Churchill maneuvered eastward along the MSR toward TF HAFEMAN from 0520 hours until 1600 hours under sporadic enemy fires. Without the advantage of communications between the two units, neither could warn the other of the 150 man enemy force that separated them.

As he left his position at roadblock #4, LT Martin was unaware of the activity developing at roadblock #3. Throughout the night, roadblock #3 received sporadic enemy fires. At 0600 hours, immediately prior to LT Martin's arrival, the enemy opened up on the position with automatic weapons, rifles and hand grenades, killing LT McMillan and three enlisted men. As he approached, the enemy ambushed LT Martin's jeep taking him and SGT Chapman prisoner. (CPL Aspden was apparently killed when the jeep crashed as a result of the enemy ambush.) Taking command of the surviving members of roadblock #3, SGT Kavetsky led eight men out of roadblock #3 under enemy fires, and set a course for roadblock #2. The move proved fatal to all but SGT Kavetsky. Each member of the patrol, except SGT Kavetsky, was picked off by sniper fire while enroute to roadblock #2. The sergeant took cover in a rice paddy where he hid until he was picked up by a personnel carrier at 1645 hours the same day.

The developing action along the MSR increased the demand for communications among the roadblocks and back to the CP. LT Powers and LT Buffington, both of Headquarters and Service Company, exercised their good judgement and moved to roadblock #1 to begin the task of repairing the communications and to locate the jeep patrol. At 0300 hours, the activity around roadblock #1 was relatively light. LT Henderson advised them not to go forward until daybreak because of flares he saw earlier in the vicinity of roadblock #3. At 0600 hours the two lieutenants moved forward to roadblock #2 where they were briefed on the fate of the jeep patrol and the capture of the LT Martin and SGT Chapman. After reporting the incident to Major Miller via the radio, LT Buffington tried to fix the head space of the thirty caliber machine gun at roadblock #2. An enemy machine gun opened up on the position, hitting LT Buffington three times. He was immediately evacuated by jeep without correcting the communications problems.

The enemy unit of 150 North Koreans which forced LT Martin to evacuate his

position at roadblock #4 early in the morning, continued to attack down the MSR to the east toward Miryang and into the defensive positions of TF HAFEMAN. By 0630 hours, Captain Hafeman was cut off on both sides - unable to move toward Yongsan in the West or Miryang in the East. Communications between the two TF positions went out. At 0830 hours Captain Hafeman ordered a motorized patrol of three vehicles to break through the enemy roadblock and on to the TF position #2. Each of the vehicles was armed with a .50 cal machine gun, a Browning Automatic Rifle and small arms. At 0900 hours the patrol departed eastward along the MSR and into the enemy roadblock. Under intense enemy machine gun fire, the patrol successfully ran the enemy roadblock and made it to position #2 at 0935 hours, reporting three casualties plus damage to one jeep and a .50 cal. Enemy casualties were reported at three snipers killed and a machine gun position knocked out. The road between the two positions appeared to be free of enemy forces. At 1000 hours a resupply of small arms ammunition, hand grenades and mortar ammunition managed to make it up the MSR to TF HAFEMAN, position #2. Captain Hafeman ordered the return of the motorized patrol with all the ammunition. The patrol loaded the ammunition and departed position #2 to the west along the

MSR toward position #1. The patrol was surprised by the enemy which had reconstituted its force covering the MSR. Although the road was clear, enemy small arms fire harassed the patrol along the entire stretch of the the MSR between the two roadblock positions. The patrol suffered no additional casualties.

The 24th Recon Company was experiencing a greater threat at the western end of the MSR near Yongsan. The enemy had interdicted the 21st Infantry in positions around Yongsan throughout the night and early morning of 12 August. An observed force of 200 North Koreans maneuvered to the high ground around Yongsan, pushing the Infantry out of their positions, and establishing a roadblock (at 1153.3 - 1387.3) on the MSR between the 24th Recon Company sector and the stretch of road patrolled by the 14th ECB. At 0900 hours LT Coghill, the Executive Officer for 24th Recon, and SGT Keelen, the Communications Chief, ran the enemy roadblock in a 1/4 ton truck in an effort to link up with the company command post in Yongsan. LT Coghill was injured during the operation, but ordered the driver to continue on to the company roadblock just outside the city. Shortly after LT Coghill arrived and explained the disposition at the enemy roadblock, Captain Cody of Company F, 9th Infantry reported to the 24th Recon Company position with a mission to attack the enemy on the high ground to the rear of the company position and the left of the MSR. The 24th Recon Company received the mission to clear the MSR using attachments from F Company and organic systems of the reconnaissance unit. 24th Recon would begin their mission as soon as possible while Captain Cody and the remainder of Company F would wait for the cover of darkness.

Master Sergeant Montee was designated the commander for the road clearing operation. His mission was to attack and destroy the enemy roadblock. If the roadblock could not be destroyed, he was to return to the company and report the disposition of the enemy. If he could clear the roadblock, he was to continue along the MSR to link up with TF HAFEMAN. M/Sergeant Montee organized his attack force with two rifle squads (from Company F, 9th Infantry), two M24 tanks and two M39 personnel carriers. The prepared to move out while the 14th ECB prepared for a new mission.

At noon Major Miller, Commander of the 14th Engineer (Combat) Battalion,



arrived at the 34th Infantry Regimental command post where he received a new mission. His units along the MSR had suffered significant losses throughout the early hours of 12 August. At this point on the 12th, they manned only two of the four roadblocks initially established. The 14th ECB was released of their responsibility to secure the MSR and ordered to move to new locations outside of Yongsan. LT Henderson and the members of roadblock #1 assumed positions north-east of Yongsan from which they would deny the enemy and civilians access to a draw leading to the south down the hill to the MSR. LT Moore and the men at roadblock #2 were relieved by LTC Smith at 1530 hours and joined LT Henderson at 1630 hours in positions atop the hill overlooking Yongsan and the MSR.

M/SGT Montee departed on his mission to attack the enemy roadblock immediately after the engineers vacated their roadblock positions on the MSR. Montee's combat team eliminated the enemy roadblock and continued, as ordered, to link up with TF HAFEMAN at its western most position (1156.0-1387.2). One non-commissioned officer, a rifle squad leader, was killed in the action. The team received special congratulations from the Assistant Division Commander, BG Menoher, who then ordered the combat team to remain with TF HAFEMAN to help defeat an even greater enemy threat emerging in front of the task force.

Due to the mounting enemy threat, at 1330 hours the G-3 approved Captain Hafeman's request to withdraw his position #1. After relocating his 81-mm mortar and 200 rounds of ammunition to a supporting position east of the pass in

range to support the forward position. At 1530 hours Captain Hafeman gave the order for all elements of position #1 to withdraw to the new position near the pass. His instructions were very direct; all soldiers were to infiltrate back to the new position fifteen minutes prior to the movement of any vehicle in order for the soldiers to cover the move of the vehicles. The move included all members of TF HAFEMAN, the members of M/SGT Montee's combat team, two members of the 14th ECB (SGT Kavetsky and another), as well as, the two tanks and one remaining personnel carrier of the 24th Recon Company. By 1600 hours, all elements of position #1 closed in the new position and took up fighting positions left and right of the pass. Activities throughout the afternoon were conducted under enemy fire. The task force lost one KIA, two seriously wounded and eight men slightly wounded, to include three South Korean police who were members of the task force. Enemy casualties were estimated between forty and sixty KIA.

The enemy continued to pressure TF HAFEMAN. At 1800 hours Captain Hafeman reorganized his forces, now approximately 135 strong due to the addition of the combat team from the 24th Recon Company. He positioned five outposts on the high ground to the right and left of the pass along the MSR. All remaining troops were moved to a second position near a pass in the vicinity of Hagongni. At this point, Captain Hafeman released the MPs to their parent unit. He then departed the outpost position to return to G-3 to brief elements of the 23rd Infantry who were preparing to attack through TF HAFEMAN to defeat the remaining enemy along the MSR between Miryang and Yongsan.

At some point, sometime between 1600 and 2030 hours, enemy forces moved back onto the MSR and established another roadblock. The 24th Recon Company organized a second combat team to eliminate the threat. LT Sneed was assigned two M24 tanks, one M39 personnel carrier and six riflemen with a mission to neutralize the roadblock and return to the company position. The team moved out at

2030 hours and engaged the enemy. The combat team was unsuccessful in breaking the enemy roadblock; however, LT Sneed pursued the fleeing enemy, continued eastward and joined TF HAFEMAN at the new position (vic 1156.0-1387.2). Due to darkness and the inability to use the tank weapons at night, LT Sneed remained with TF HAFEMAN.

Enemy activity was light for the remainder of the night. While TF HAFEMAN, the 14th Engineer Combat Battalion and the 24th Recon Company rested, the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry prepared to assume the fight to control the MSR. The following morning at 0500 hours, the Infantry battalion moved through TF HAFEMAN's positions and down the MSR to the West. This operation ended the rear area defense role for TF HAFEMAN. At 0900 hours, 13 August 1950, TF HAFEMAN was dissolved. After a valient effort in combat roles, the combat service support soldiers of TF HAFEMAN returned to their duties in the division command post. while the members of the 14th Engineer Combat Battalion, 24th Reconnaissance Company, and Company F, 9th Infantry continued in their defense of the Yongsan area.

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